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LIFE IN THE MAKING

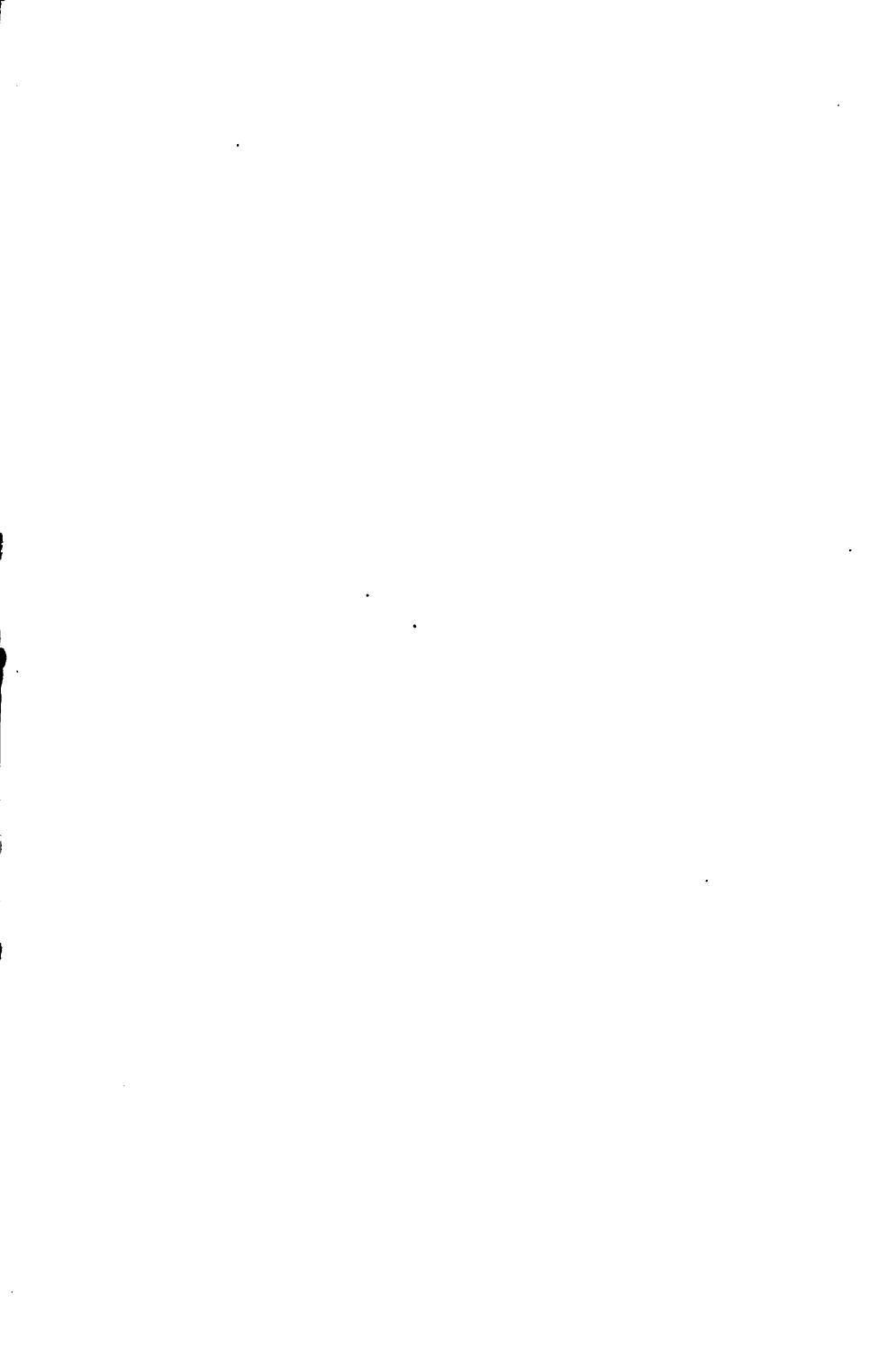


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LIFE IN THE MAKING

AN APPROACH TO RELIGION THROUGH
THE METHOD OF MODERN PRAGMATISM

BY

LOREN B. MACDONALD

"Man as yet is being made, and ere the crowning Age of ages,
Shall not æon after æon pass and touch him into shape?"
Tennyson.



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FOREWORD

That religion bears some message of supreme value to human life is an assumption, more or less explicit, in all the great historic faiths. It has been taken for granted that, in some way or other, man's life on earth is safer, worthier, happier with religion than without it. All the more unfortunate it seems, therefore, that this desirable treasure should have been offered to man at the price of an intellectual sacrifice which he is sometimes not willing to make. Must the only entrance to a temple so beautiful and inspiring always be that of some difficult creed or doctrine? Shall man forever be expected to perform some strenuous, and to many, impossible, mental feats in the form of belief and assent before he can enter in and enjoy its harmonies? He is not called upon to yield that intellectual tribute at the shrine of other great emotional or spiritual interests. Art and music, for instance, do not demand any humiliation on the part of reason and intelligence before they come with their blessed ministry to human needs. Why should not the religious interest, supposed to be of far more significance to life than these, offer its ministry on terms equally acceptable?

To all who are concerned in the answer to these questions the message of this book is earnestly and respectfully addressed. There is a large and

increasing number of high-minded and thoughtful men and women to-day who have turned away from the temple of religion, not because of any perversity of will or spiritual incapacity, but simply because they could not subscribe to the dogmas imposed without sacrificing their sense of intellectual integrity. Among those thus repelled there must be many who have some sense of regret and sadness at the necessity of such an estrangement. They have wondered vaguely, it may be, if there was not some way of admission to the hopes and inspirations of religion other than that of dogma. They have dreamed, perhaps, of some road to the largest religious possibilities of life so natural and reasonable that the wayfaring man, though a rationalist and a lover of truth, may not err therein. Is there any possible method, they have said, through which, if religion must make its intellectual demands, it can be made to impose them at the end rather than at the beginning of its ministry? Can religion, with all its practical stimulus and uplift come first, and theology, with its difficult intellectual problems, come afterward?

It may be interesting to those who thus turn yearningly and inquiringly toward a temple from which they are excluded to learn that a new method, or rather the revival of an old method under a new name, has recently been introduced into the schools of philosophy. This novel approach to philosophic truth is sometimes desig-

nated by the word "humanism," more frequently by the less familiar term "pragmatism." The "pragmatic," or "practical" principle in philosophy is a mode of discovering truth, and a test of its validity, with reference to active and living values. It calls upon all metaphysical ideas and doctrines to give an account of themselves by showing that they serve some useful purpose in response to living needs. If the ideas of the Absolute, for example, or the metaphysical conception of Substance, may be held or not held without making any appreciable difference in the direction or meaning of life, then they correspond to no reality whatever, and may be just as well dropped out of the human mind. All truth, pragmatism declares, must in some way be verifiable by experience. A conception that does not work—that is, that does not to some degree modify our experience—is either not true, or is a conception the truth or falsehood of which can never be discovered. Pragmatism in philosophy, therefore, would insist that all truth can be stated in terms of life. And this new philosophical departure is audacious enough to affirm that all the great a priori and speculative doctrines of philosophy which have held sway over the human mind for ages must either be verified by some aspect of human experience, or else resign the authority which they have hitherto held over human thought.

It is evident that the thorough-going applica-

tion of this pragmatic principle to religion would create some disturbance among its well-established and time-honored tenets. It would shatter many idols of doctrine. It would lay irreverent hands on many a sacred structure of creed whose only excuse for being is that it has come down to us from the past. It would demand their credentials in terms of life from many a dogma or institution whose chief office now is to serve as a bar to human progress. On the other hand this search for a living truth in religion would earnestly and sympathetically trace out the vital and essential elements in all the varied forms of religious belief. It might reveal even in over-belief and error some values for life that would justify their existence. Best of all, the introduction of this pragmatic principle into the world of religious thought and endeavor would present a free admission to all into the sacred enclosure. No intellectual statement, not even the simplest or most fundamental, would any longer be a condition of entrance into the religious fold. In place of this would come the nobler and more inspiring challenge to action. The whole wide field of possible experience, it would be said, is open to you; are you willing to enter and test some of its claims and prospects? Are you willing to try some experiments in the high art of living? You are asked to believe only that the possibilities of human life on this earth have not yet been exhausted. You are required to have faith only

that all life, including yours, has in it the power and potency of greater things than it has yet displayed. You are bidden to accept nothing that you cannot verify by your own experience. In other words, this religion of life asks that every man shall himself be the authority for his own religious creed, and he is required to test on that authority of a possible personal experience everything that is presented to him in the form of higher faith and vision.

In a humble, but earnest attempt to depict such a pragmatic form of religion in the following pages the author does not wish to involve anyone else in whatever misrepresentations or logical defects of which the attempt may be guilty. While acknowledging his indebtedness to the chief expounders of philosophical pragmatism, and, especially, to Professor William James, at whose feet, both in college and out of it, it has been his good fortune to sit as a humble learner, he does not claim their authority for more than the bare suggestions of the opinions here expressed. It is not intended in this book to carry the doctrine to its metaphysical conclusions, or to present a consistent scheme of philosophy. The language is purposely chosen with reference to the popular rather than the academic reader. Neither in its style nor in some of the conclusions reached will the book be recognized, doubtless, by the leading pragmatists as a legitimate expression of their own intellectual method. This divergence, how-

ever, may only serve to prove the wide extension and fruitfulness of the method itself, and some even unexpected and questionable applications of it may be forgiven on the ground of thus revealing its possibilities. And yet the author does not send this modest word forth into the world without some hope that, acceptable or not acceptable to the philosophers, it may, nevertheless, carry some message of hope and inspiration to those, who, in the common walks of life, may have ceased to hear the appeal of religion coming in the more established and conventional language.

I

LIFE SIMPLIFIED

A modern singer, who expresses in tones clearer, possibly, than any other, the enlightened thought of this latest stage in human progress, suggests life as something still in the process of the making.

"Man as yet is being made, and ere the crowning
Age of ages
Shall not æon after æon pass and touch him into
shape?"

Looked at seriously, do not these lines raise some curious questions? What was life before it had been "touched into shape," up to that point where Tennyson dealt with it? What was the raw material of life that "æon after æon" had been working over and elaborating until it had produced the complex and many-sided man of this later age?

Modern manufacturing art has produced some admirable results in the form of garments to protect and adorn the human body. For fineness of texture, for beauty and variety of color, for artistic design, no clothing of any age has surpassed these later products. And yet the dealers will tell us that, in spite of all science and art in manufacture, the value of the garment depends

largely on the quality and worth of the raw material. There was once some wool or cotton in its crude state just as Nature gave it. Ceasing to be raw material under the transforming hand of man, that natural product, nevertheless, still survives, partly, at least, determining the value of the finished garment.

Granting that science, art, civilization have done much for man to make him what he is, has it done, or can it do everything? Just as the wise manufacturer, seeking to improve his product, finds it necessary once in a while to go back and examine the original gift of Nature on which he works, so man, in his efforts to better his existence, finds it necessary now and then to go back and find out if he can what it was with which Nature originally endowed him. When we seek to define life in terms of modern knowledge and civilization we find ourselves hopelessly confused and uncertain. Conscious reflection has revealed so many and diverse capacities, instincts, aims and satisfactions that make up life that even the fullest statement we can make of it is sure to be inadequate. Not only, then, for the sake of preserving the original values of life, but in the interest also of clearness of thought, let us endeavor as far as possible to reduce life to those simple terms best described by the word "natural."

That theory of development known as evolution, and now almost universally wrought into

the structure of modern thought, teaches us that somewhere in the cosmic process that which had hitherto been blind, unconscious life on the earth became endowed with conscious sensation. It is not necessary for our present purpose to satisfy our minds as to the exact point where that sentient being began, or how it could have come forth out of something that was so absolutely different from itself. In these matters we must often be contented with Topsy's vague explanation of her own origin, and in the assurance that consciousness did somehow "grow" out of an unconscious life below it, we must go on our way without further question.

Assuming the existence of conscious life, what was its primeval form and nature? It was what we may loosely call mere animal existence. In the absence of any immediate or first-hand knowledge of what that pure animal existence was, we can but accept the best account of it given by scientific observation. The life of a dog or a horse, we are told, is but a continuous stream of sensations, undisturbed by self-conscious reflection. These creatures never separate themselves in thought from the world in which they live. The dog never knows himself as dog, the horse has not the remotest idea of his own individual existence. Granting that in the more intelligent of these animals there are some appearances of reasoning from cause to effect and even faint glimmers of moral perception, it is never-

theless safe to say that life represented in them can be summed up as pure sensation. A feeling of hunger and a perception of food blindly associated with the gratification of that craving; a mass of appetites, instincts, impulses bringing into the stream of sentient life the various objects that satisfy them; the mere sensation of an outward world, including other animal life, without knowing that it is an outward world or that the other animal life is separate from its own; this describes with tolerable accuracy what life is even in the most developed of the brute creation. That existence of the dog and the horse, if not life reduced to its simplest terms, is life reduced to terms simple enough for our present purpose. We are not too proud to acknowledge our own kinship to life thus simplified. We are willing, possibly, seeing how wholesome, innocent and care-free that animal life is, to recognize in it the rather attractive raw material out of which our own life has been fashioned. With some such longing look backward, at any rate, one of our spokesmen, Walt Whitman, paid his tribute to this form of life below us:

"I think I could turn and live with animals, they
are so placid and self-contain'd,
I stand and look at them long and long.
They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for
their sins,

They do not make me sick discussing their duty to
God,
Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the
mania of owning things,
Not one kneels to another nor to his kind that lived
thousands of years ago,
Not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole
earth."

Somewhere, again, in the ascending process of life on earth the simple life of the animal began to be self-conscious, and with that change the animal took on the form of man. With that step, assumed to be upward, did life abandon the simple, naïve quality of animal existence? Not wholly. At its earliest stages, and even in some later phases not too much "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," man's life on earth has been flooded with this natural, spontaneous joy of animal existence. Was it because reason was at first, or in some cases is even now, too feeble to assert its sway? Was it because self-conscious reflection, with the accompanying knowledge of right and wrong, was not at the beginning, and is not even to-day, dominant enough to take complete control? We do not know. But we do know that, long after man appeared on the earth, even down to the present time, that mighty stream of pure animal existence, flowing down from countless ages behind him, has poured itself into the life of the human animal, transfiguring him with the unchecked

joy of existence. To recognize the unmeasured value of such an element in life is not in any sense to repudiate the results of later evolution. To say that there is a wholesome and possibly, indispensable, contribution to the worth of life in mere physical exhilaration, or to say that in the free play of the healthy bodily faculties there is a good and necessary basis for all life, this is not in any sense to depreciate the later fruits of developed mind and spirit. That is simply the raw material of life. It is not merely carried through all the later process of manufacture, but it is inextricably woven into the finished texture. What was the meaning of that song which Browning puts into the mouth of David the Shepherd ministering to the diseased and discordant soul of Saul? It was the message of Nature that he brought to his troubled spirit. It was the soothing, healing, redeeming power of life, life in its first simple stages, that the healthy lad tried to apply to this mind that had lost its poise.

“Oh, our manhood’s prime vigor! No spirit feels
waste,
Not a muscle is stopped in its playing nor sinew un-
braced.
Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping from rock
to rock,
The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree, the
cool silver shocks

Of the plunge in a pool's living water, the hunt of
the bear,
And the sultriness showing the lion is couched in
his lair.

* * * * *

How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to
employ

All the heart and the soul and the senses forever in
joy!"

In all ages in their efforts to explain the world, men have sought for one central fact from which all other facts could be derived. The Greek philosopher, Thales, believed that in water was to be found the essence that in changed form made up the existing universe. Pythagoras started from the principle of number, with unity as its essence, and attempted to interpret the world in terms of mathematical law. Much later in the history of human thought, the English scientist, Tyndall, declaring that he saw in matter and force the promise and potency of all forms of terrestrial life, indicated the primal fact which guides the materialist in his attempts to give a rational account of nature and life. Again, in these still later times, the seekers after the truth have fixed upon another fact which to them is central and primitive. That starting-point is life as substantially described in the lines of Browning just quoted. That, which is human experience reduced to its simplest terms,

is the one FACT of which all other facts are merely derivative. Call this new philosophy pragmatism or humanism, or what you will, its distinctive purpose, as the writer understands it, is to test all truth and reality by its relation to that one fact of life. It accepts that as the starting-point of all its interpretations of the universe. It does not try to go back of that Fact, because it cannot. Something must be accepted as *given*. As Thales accepted matter, as Pythagoras accepted number, as Tyndall accepted material atoms as the bed-rock of reality, in no case attempting to dig deeper, so this latest method of interpreting the world accepts conscious existence as the bed-rock of all inquiry. In terms of life, then, we purpose to examine and test, not only the truths of the outward world, but of the inward world as well. It is a philosophy of values. On the basis of life values it calls to the bar of judgment all claims of ultimate truth, all doctrine that passes under the guise of religion. It is a bold undertaking. But whether it succeeds fully or partially, or not at all, it seems to the writer worth while, at least to make the effort.

Two things it may be needful to say at the outset. First, the method of inquiry here proposed is positive, not negative; its direction is forward and not backward.

So beautiful and attractive has seemed that natural, simple, healthy life of man in its primi-

tive stages that we hardly wonder that men, burdened with the complexities of civilization, have turned back now and then with eager yearning in that direction. We perceive that yearning in Rousseau, when with passionate appeal he called upon men and women to go back to Nature. It appears again in the German Nietzsche and his followers in their revolt against the restraints of our highly-developed moral laws and social institutions, and in their insistence that the superman should be the supreme object of human endeavor. And did not something of this beautiful vision of life in its simplest terms come to Jesus, as he set a little child in the midst of his disciples, and bade them see in that naïve life a type of the kingdom of heaven? To these, and to many of the great multitude of reformers who plead for the simple life, to-day, it seems as if life, in trying to go forward, had lost its way in the tangled forests of enlightenment and civilization. To them it appears that advancing knowledge had led to little else than disenchantment, developed law to increasing slavery, and every new art and mode of culture had only served to extinguish a little more those natural instincts of the soul in which alone is joy and satisfaction. Let us drop the burden of it all, say these reformers, the burden even of our overgrown material wealth and invention with all the injustice and strife it carries with it, and going back to Nature, receive

from her, as of old, that gift of life, and life more abundant which somewhere she still holds for us in her keeping.

Sympathizing profoundly with the spirit of this cry, "Back to Nature," we must at the same time repudiate anything that seems like a retrogressive movement. What we call civilization has won its victories at too great a cost to allow us to return one step on the toilsome way it has come. Not one genuine ray of light thrown on life through science and reason, not one social institution by which life for mankind has been really liberated and enlarged, not one art or device which has actually added to the ease and comfort of existence, not one of these can be spared in the endeavor after that fuller life for which in these pages we are pleading. We could not turn thus backward if we would. Granting that our progress does mean disenchantment—once the illusion of life exposed, is it possible to be ever again deluded? When knowledge once comes, it comes to stay, and for better or for worse, we must accept all the gains that the ages have brought us. The only possible question is, how can these latest results of progress be filled out and warmed with LIFE? How can the test of life be so brought to bear on the great mass of modern beliefs and established theories that the dead and useless can be separated from the vital and effective? How can this whole vast structure of twentieth cen-

tury civilization be so flooded with that vital current of which Browning's shepherd minstrel sings, that the procession of the ages may still go on, not to decreasing, but to ever increasing wealth and satisfaction? Any system of thought or religious scheme that, looking backward instead of forward, does not at least try to answer these momentous questions of the day, is doomed to certain failure. That knowledge must "grow from more to more" may be taken as the one inexorable demand of the present age, and no gospel of redemption can to-day be at all adequate to its task if it does not face fearlessly and gladly any revelations that may come with widened outlooks and expanded intelligence.

Another disclaimer it may be well to insert here in behalf of this attempt to interpret the world in terms of life. That which we have called the raw material of life, the joy and the thrill of healthy, unobstructed action, that, you say, is life only in its lowest and least developed stages. Found only in the lower animal, or in the primitive man, or at best in the cruder stage of childhood, it is confessedly sensuous and of coarser fibre. And yet it is urged that this raw material of life should be continued throughout, even up into what we like to call the higher life, the realm of the ideal and the spiritual. Is this new pragmatic method, then, but a new form of Epicureanism? As in all other

so-called hedonistic systems of philosophy does it deify happiness, positing that as the supreme end and aim of existence? Is it just another of those empirical materialistic schemes that, practically denying that there is any purpose for the human soul higher than happiness, still under the specious guise of spiritual and religious truth, strives to minister to the unspiritual and irreligious by meeting them on their own low level?

This charge we hope those who are good enough to read the following pages will find sufficiently refuted. We can pause here to say only that life, while taking on varied forms, in essence knows no higher and no lower. If we could see it clearly we would find that the vital force that beautifies the tiniest shrub is the same that beautifies the loftiest elm. If we could see it clearly we would know that the Life that thrills in the simple savage is the same that glorifies the soul of the hero and the saint. And as to the word "happiness," we accept it or reject it according to the meaning that is put into it. If the word is used in any degree as a term of contempt, meaning mere sensuous gratification, in that case we deny that it indicates our aim or purpose. On the other hand, if by "happiness" is meant fullness of life, the joy that always accompanies gratified needs on any so-called "plane" of action, then we acknowledge that happiness may in a certain

sense be the underlying principle of this phase of religious effort. We must confess, that we do not see why life should be esteemed any more admirable or "higher" simply because it is accompanied by pain or any kind of self-torture. We do not see why all the possible functions of human nature, the most altruistic and heroic, may not be accompanied by a certain sense of joyful exhilaration, or why even the aim of such sublimated happiness should be thought to lower the tone of human action. Happiness taken in its largest significance is woven into the texture of life itself. And if we are to seek the truth in terms of life, it follows, therefore, that in this modified sense, we must seek it also in terms of happiness.

II

LIFE RATIONALIZED

That period of a child's life which is almost wholly instinctive is not altogether without its charm to the observer, especially to the fond parents, or to a stranger interested in infant psychology. Every movement of the little hands groping blindly for food, every cry expressive of hunger or need, every closing of the eyes in response to Nature's demand for sleep and rest, all these manifestations of unreflecting, and yet purposeful, life in the infant is an inexhaustible source of wonder and entertainment to the loving or thoughtful onlooker.

And yet, more than once, parents, wearying of the utter helplessness and blindness of their child, have looked forward with hope and pleasure to the time when the little one shall become, as they say, more "reasonable." It will be so good when the developing mind can understand, and do for itself a score of things in which now it must be passively guided. By and by it will know of itself that a fall from the steps will hurt, or that the hot stove will burn, or that some things are good to eat and some things are bad. Sometime it will be able to tell in what part of the body lies the pain that troubles it, and later it will be able even to dis-

cover the causes of that distress. The time is coming when the growing boy or girl will pass from the perception of particular objects to that of classes, making a generalization broader than that involved in mere sensation. Not far away, also, is the period when the child-life, but now so helpless and passive, will begin to ask for the explanation of familiar objects and events, propounding questions involving principles of right and wrong and problems of causation which the parents themselves cannot answer. That is the never-ceasing miracle of developing reason, the gift of conscious reflection bestowed by Nature upon her human offspring, the crowning glory of life in man. With that gift men, in every case emerging from the instinctive life of infancy, have come to read the records of creation and to tell the secrets of the stars. With that gift of reason Newton, from the simple fall of an apple, discovered a principle that guides the worlds in space; with it Darwin, from the study of minutest specimens of plant and animal, rose to the contemplation of a world-process of development that throws more light on the mystery of the world than could come with whole centuries of mere unreasoning observation. By the use of that same gift of reason, moreover, Plato and Kant have given to the world still larger and more inclusive generalizations of Nature and Life, while with that same instrument of thought Calvin and Marti-

neau, in their separate theologies, have sought to probe to the inmost secrets of the universe.

It is a commonplace of modern science that the development of the infant into the full-grown man is an exact transcript of the development of the race. When we watch the child so slowly, but wondrously, passing from the life of instinct to the life of reason we are watching on a vastly smaller scale the growth of man's life on earth from the beginning up to the present. Somewhere, then, in the dim and inconceivably distant past,—about the time, possibly, that he began to stand on his feet and look up, man began to think. He was able then to look in upon his own life. He saw it more or less as a whole, saw it in perspective, comparing its past with its present, and both with its future. Slowly, more and more he learned to ask whence? What? Whither? not only with respect to the outward world in which he found himself, but with respect to the inward world of mind and spirit. Somewhere as the consummate product of evolution, man, the thinker did arrive on this globe, and all human life henceforward was to be no longer purely instinctive, but in varying degrees under the guidance of reason.

How, now, does this pragmatic method in religion, bound to speak always in terms of life, regard this advent of reason into the great world-drama? Certainly it must agree with all

other systems of thought that the addition of reason to life was a gain immeasurable in its value and significance. It gave to man dominion over all forms of unreasoning life below him. It gave him a vastly extended and inspiring view of the universe in which he lives. It furnished him with a thousand short cuts and easy methods of gaining life's ends and purposes. It gave him all that we mean when we proudly speak of science, invention, government, all in fact that is connoted by the more comprehensive word, "civilization." So obvious and vast, in fact, is the gain of life through reason that it would seem absurd even to name it were it not that somewhere lurking in our minds is a slight sense of hesitation, an indistinct feeling of qualification as we name these undoubted advantages. What can this mean? Certainly the value of reason itself as an instrument of knowledge can have no limitations? Strictly in the interests of life, life fuller and richer, surely we dare not affirm that man's capacity to know is in any degree a failure. If even a dim suggestion of such failure occurs it must be not in the use, but in the abuse of a gift so divine.

And that reason can thus, by a perverted use, be made to obstruct rather than forward, man's highest purposes, is an undoubted fact. Holding a brief for our client, Life, we make bold to indict reason first of all when it pretends to anything like exclusive interest and authority.

It was Shelley, was it not, who declared that to him, it was nothing short of a calamity when science revealed the composition of the rainbow, and the physical cause of that glorious picture sometimes painted by the setting sun in the western sky. If there is any validity in this complaint of the poet, then advancing knowledge has indeed a great deal of mischief to answer for. It has given a prosaic and unattractive interpretation of many beautiful objects other than the rainbow and the sunset. It has torn to pieces with its inexorable analysis many a fair flower of faith and sentiment in which hitherto men had taken sweet delight and satisfaction. Nothing is too sacred or venerable to escape the iconoclastic touch of the prying intellect. Ancient traditions that have given a romantic charm to human history; sacred books that, with divine authority, have given hope and assurance to the human soul for centuries; visions and dreams that have imparted cheer and comfort to the heart in face of the unseen and the unexplored; all these have been made to yield up their claims, as the merciless search-light of reason has more and more been turned upon them. Indeed, intellectual activity seems to threaten us to-day with even a greater calamity than that which Shelley hinted at, or that these shattered idols suggest. Not only, we are told, is reason taking the beauty, romance and faith out of life, but, in the form of criticism,

it is drying up the very fountains of all creative and original activity in art, literature and spiritual forms of progress. An age that is preëminently intellectual and scientific, it is said, can never be a creative age. It will deal intelligently and appreciatively with the great and beautiful things that a former age has given; but, nevermore, sounds this sad lament, out of the depth and richness of life will come forth mighty masterpieces of art equal to the past, nevermore out of the heart of Nature will roll those burdens of thought and revelation that in "Bibles old" seemed to open up to human gaze the holy of holies of life's inmost temple. There are moods when, dimly aware of this blight of life which the reason brings, we would join with Tennyson in warding the Critic off from Life's more sacred precincts.

"Dark-browed sophist, come not anear;

* * * * *

Hollow smile and frozen sneer! Come not here.
The flowers would faint at your cruel cheer.

* * * * *

In the heart of the garden the merry bird chants,
It would fall to the ground if you came in."

To all this what does pragmatism have to say? It does not rail at reason, or weep at the sad inroads it is making on Life's fair domain, as is too often done by the conservers of man's

spiritual interests at the present time. This practical gospel aims to restore life's right proportion and harmony, that is all. If the leader of an orchestra should find that the player on the clarinet, in his eagerness to add to the music, was asserting exclusive rights, and drowning out all the other instruments, he would endeavor to set that particular player right with respect to the total harmony. That is precisely what we would do with life itself, which is nothing but a symphony of varied interests. The so-called faculties of the soul are but different ways of approach to the world's inexhaustible treasures. We know the world through a sense of the beautiful as truly as we know it through intellectual analysis. We understand humanity through the heart of love and sympathy as much as we do through the study of psychology. Through the intuitions and emotions of the poet and the musician come some essential insights and some perception of values that do not come with any exercise of reason. Possibly no man had a more exclusively intellectual view of the universe than Charles Darwin. When he rather sadly confesses that in gaining that view, he had allowed other interests, music, poetry, art, religion, to die out of his nature, he simply acknowledges that he had chosen to play one instrument in the orchestra of life to the exclusion of others. That was his choice. In view of the highest possible results of life the great scientist thinks himself he made a mistake.

We think so too. We claim that the best music comes from the full orchestra, each instrument joining with the others in perfect harmony. But the truth? you say. Well, tested by life, the music of the full orchestra is the truth and there is no other. Let us wait. Doubtless the clarinet player will discover himself some day that his instrument alone fails to produce the total grand effect. Doubtless, in some new influx of life, reason and criticism will wake up to a similar discovery with respect to the total grand effect of truth. Then, indeed, knowledge, still "growing from more to more," yet

"Mind and heart, according well,
Shall make one music as before,
But vaster."

In the same interests of life, moreover, we would call reason to account when it assumes the airs of omniscience.

There are on the writer's desk two books, published within the last decade, both making statements about the universe that to the pragmatist are not only wholly unwarranted, but are productive of positive harm. Each gives in its way a monistic view of the world, that is, the grand total of nature and life comprehended in one grand formula. The unifying principle in the one case is what the author calls Mind or Spirit. Seeing the whole world as the expression of one universal Mind this theistic writer talks as glibly

about the Absolute and Infinite, and describes its modes of projecting from itself this finite and relative world as easily as if he had been present to witness the process.

The other book is written by an eminent German scientist who announces a monism of a different kind, but not less astonishing in its intellectual pretensions. Ernst Haeckle, in this work, "The Riddle of the Universe," instead of taking Mind or Spirit as the unifying principle, lays down what he calls the "law of substance," the fundamental law of the constancy of matter and force, as his expression of the Absolute. "The monism of the cosmos," he says, "which we establish thereon proclaims the absolute dominion of the great eternal iron laws throughout the universe. It thus shatters, at the same time, the three central dogmas of the dualistic philosophy—the personality of God, the immortality of the soul, and the freedom of the will." And at the close of this, one of the clearest and most plausible expositions of materialistic monism ever written, the writer expresses his ultimate thought about the universe in the well-known words of Goethe,

"By eternal laws
Of iron ruled
Must all fulfill
The cycle of
Their destiny."

Now it is true that in our efforts to explain the world there is an innate and incurable propensity in our rational nature to seek unity, an intellectual demand that stops not short of finding the One—one principle, one law, that will account for the great totality of things. It may be true, also, that there is an unconscious monistic assumption in all our thinking, and that some conception of the universe as a whole must be accepted at least as a working hypothesis. And yet this, which is little more than an end and a striving underlying all thought, is very different from unity announced as a finished achievement and laid down as a dogma. We remember gazing once with a company of friends at an ancient map made soon after the discovery of America by an English scholar who never himself had made a voyage to the newly-discovered continent. The lines of the map which this man evolved out of his own consciousness fell so far short of the lines of the western hemisphere as to-day we know it, they were so grossly mistaken and ludicrously inadequate in their attempt to describe the reality, that they aroused in us, not only a curious interest, but a decided sense of amusement. When men evolve out of their own inner consciousness a complete map of the universe, and, taking it seriously, thrust it upon us as a finished description of the Reality, is the attempt any less amusing? What is this unified world, this Absolute whether announced by the theologian or the ma-

terialist? It is nothing but a universe wholly discovered and bounded by the mind of man, a vast continent fenced in by a scheme and a system into which all further discoveries of fact must somehow or other be crowded. Do we not turn from all these finished systems sometimes with infinite relief and delight as we view again the infinite and rich variety, the boundless multiplicity and extent of nature and life as we ourselves may behold it? We love to go to the world not as the makers of maps, but as explorers. Those of us who are coming to believe in this practical road to truth as the only road possible are beginning to say, let who will dogmatize about, and quarrel over, questions of the Infinite and the Absolute, questions that make no real difference in life anyway; as for us, we will take life and the world as they actually present themselves to us, and see what we can make of them. We have a feeling that the universe is too big to be described by any map that can be possibly outlined by the human reason. And with no sense of disappointment or sorrow at this failure of reason, but with boundless joy and inspiration, we face a universe that, as yet unexplored and unlimited, gives promise of life ever richer and more expansive.

Give two school-children a difficult mathematical problem to solve. The failure to arrive at a solution will affect each in a different way according to the difference in individual temperament. The one, mentally intense and nervously excitable,

will be very much wrought up over the intellectual puzzle, and if obliged finally to give it up, may sink into a condition of despair and gloom on account of the defeat.

The other child, equally gifted in mind, but of a rather more robust and healthy nature, will work at the problem with interest and industry, but, as if dimly aware that the issues of life do not lie in the success or failure of that particular effort, will never allow it to "get on his nerves," or to disturb the equanimity of his spirit. And when, finally, he concludes it is vain to work any more over the enigma, he turns just as cheerfully and hopefully as before to the great arena of life with its thousands of other problems vastly more vital and more possible of solution.

Undoubtedly the chief religious bugbear of our age is indicated by the word "agnosticism." Hamilton and Mansel through philosophy, and Huxley through science have defined for us clearly the limits and antinomies of human thought, the scientist giving us the word "agnostic," itself, as applied to the man who frankly acknowledges that he is unable to solve these intellectual puzzles. The perplexing questions of substance and attribute, time and eternity, free-will and determinism, the relative and the absolute, the finite and the infinite and, more or less involved in these, the problems of God and immortality, all these questions the

agnostic modestly affirms that he cannot answer. Well, what if you cannot? a healthy, practical religious philosophy is asking at the present time. What is the need of becoming hysterical or gloomy over the failure to solve that kind of a rational problem? The issues of life are not involved in those intellectual puzzles, and theological speculation and dogma have done incalculable harm in implying that they are. Men lived, and lived happily and successfully thousands of years before they even made the attempt to solve those problems. We do not have to know what the "flower in the crannied wall" is, "root and all and all in all," nor yet what "God and man is," in order to enjoy the fragrance and beauty of the flower or to take full advantage of a divine universe in which it is possible still to find ourselves. Why, in short, may there not come forth by and by a robust and fertile sort of agnosticism to take the place of the present variety, so inclined to be melancholy and sterile? Why not an agnosticism that frankly and explicitly admits that its rational attempts to explain the riddles of the universe are wholly unavailing, but an agnosticism that sees on account of that failure the universe looming up with vaster proportions and more inspiring prospects? If we have a friend whose mind and character we cannot fully understand, we give him the benefit of the doubt, and conclude that there may be

in him ranges of thought and motive too large to be compassed by our critical faculty. Why not give the universe the full benefit of the doubt attaching to our failure to understand it? Not sterile, but fruitful, not sad, but full of hope and joyful expectancy, shall the agnostic attitude become when it means not so much the utter incapacity and helplessness of the human mind to answer all its questions as it means that eye hath not yet seen, nor ear yet heard, nor hath yet entered into the heart of man the things that lie hidden in the deep recesses of Life and Nature.

It is a curious fact that in the worship of the gods on the part of many ancient races there seemed to lie vaguely in the mind of the worshiper the presence of some being superior to the deity to which at that moment he was paying homage. When we read in the Vedas the prayers offered in turn to Vishnu, Agni or Varuna, or when we read in the Homeric poems the ascriptions now to Minerva, now to Apollo, and now to omnipotent Zeus, we would think that the deity then in mind was supreme and all-sufficient. And it is only by hints, and vague suggestions we discover that permanent background of Reality perceived behind them all, that deity of deities that in their deepest thought was that true object of worship for which all others were imperfect and fleeting substitutes.

We all have our gods, our more or less clearly reasoned out creed or system of religious thought through which we look at life. It is right and inevitable that we should. These intellectual moulds of religious belief and dogma are immensely valuable to us, they may be indispensable in our present stage of progress in maintaining strength and courage, in the effort to acquit ourselves nobly in the fight. And yet dare any of us deny that at times, in moments when we are theologically off our guard, or in times of deep and quiet intuition, there has come to us the sense of a great background of Reality which our little system does not, and cannot compass? We think the Hindu and Greek religions were all the truer and greater because of the sense in the souls of the worshipers of an Unknown God. Time has destroyed all the other gods of those ancient pantheons, but this one, undefined and uncomprehended, still remains. Shall not our little systems, also, have their day and cease to be? And may it not sometimes appear that the best thing about our religion, too, was not that intellectual scheme of which at times we made confident and dogmatic assertion, but that dim vision of a truth and a reality somewhere of which, in our most creed-bound moods, we could not be wholly oblivious?

III

LIFE REVEALED

If asked what event in modern history was most momentous in its effects on the progress of the race, doubtless most people would say that the discovery of America by Columbus in 1492 was most significant. It was the revelation to civilized men of a new world. It necessitated the rearrangement of their geographies. It meant the readjustment of their ancient conceptions to fit an enlarged globe. It is not too much to say in fact that there was not an established theory or time-honored belief that was not more or less modified and reconstructed by this new knowledge of the nature and extent of the world which men had all along been inhabiting.

And yet there are some thoughtful students of human progress who would say that, reckoned in actual results, another modern event was even more momentous. In the year 1620 Lord Bacon published his famous work which he called the "Novum Organon," containing the first explicit declaration of that method of inquiry which has produced the great body of scientific truths and inventions which distinguish the age in which we live. We wonder sometimes why it was, that one century in the whole world's history, the nineteenth, probably opened up to view a deeper

and more extensive knowledge of natural law and gave into man's hands a more general control over natural forces than all the preceding centuries combined. The reason is not far to seek. From the time of Aristotle, more than four centuries before Christ, to the time of Bacon, the human mind was almost wholly enslaved by a method of knowledge that was purely abstract and deductive. The scholastics of the Middle Ages it is said solemnly and at great length debated the question how many angels could stand on the point of a needle. About as useless and remote as this were the questions which, nearly up to the nineteenth century, practically occupied the minds of scholars and thinkers. Questions of pure logic: does an object consist wholly of its attributes or is there a substance behind the attributes? Is there such an entity as man in general or are there only individual men? the question of nominalism and realism. Is the human will free to act of itself, or is its action predetermined by the Omnipotent? What are the attributes of God, and how from those attributes can we deduce the world as we know it? These were some of the questions that, for many centuries, seemed to the minds of men of greatest, if not of exclusive importance. But we who enjoy the richer knowledge of the world revealed in the last two centuries cannot be too grateful that, gradually, even before Bacon, men woke up to the fact that they were living in

a world of whose actual laws and possibilities they knew little or nothing. Then more and more, inspired by the "Novum Organon," and the growing scientific spirit, they turned to this great, wonderful life of Nature in the eager search for its secrets. No longer satisfied with their logical reasoning *about* it or their preconceived theories of what it *ought to be*, they came to Nature, humbly confessing their ignorance, and content to ask simply, what is this Nature, what is this world about which we have been so long merely speculating? Then followed all that long, laborious and painstaking investigation which has characterized modern science. A method of patient research and experimentation, a method beginning with facts and rising from facts to theories, this method, first clearly laid down by Bacon, and followed by all who have really contributed to the scientific knowledge of the twentieth century, has revealed a world of wonder which the wildest dreams of the theologians and the philosophers could never have pictured. And what is the lesson that modern science teaches us—a lesson fraught with even more significance and value than the rich results of science themselves which we are enjoying? It is the truth that there are some things in this universe that can be known only by experience. It is the truth that somewhere hidden in the mysterious depths of Nature there are laws, forces, resources which we could never

have been aware of if somebody had not tried them, tried them by processes of actual experiment and verification. Not without theories, of course, have men gone to this patient investigation of Nature. Not without preconceived assumptions, and unverified hypotheses have these eager inquirers come to the world seeking its secrets. But empty and useless would all these theories and assumptions have been if Nature herself had not borne them out, honoring the drafts of theory that were made upon her by the solid cash values of fact and reality.

That this method of experimentation has been productive of marvelous and far-reaching results in science is clear to all. Has it any such value when applied to religion? We have been speculating about life and its destiny: but do we know what this life actually is, about which we have been speculating? We are vaguely aware of this conscious being which we call life. We even know it divided for practical purposes, into body, mind and spirit. With our psychological science we go a little deeper, and watching as far as we can the mental processes, give a more or less clear description of what we there observe. But is there not such a thing as investigating life in the sense of finding out what it can actually do? As study and experimentation have discovered in Nature the marvels of electrical force and the mysterious phenomena of radium, may not study and experimentation

discover in human nature marvels of force as great and wonderful?

In an old Hebrew legend we are told that a humble shepherd, the son-in-law of a priest of Midian, was attracted one day by a strange flame proceeding out of the midst of a bush, leaving the bush apparently unaffected by its heat. "And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush." And just because the great law-giver did *turn aside* to investigate this unusual occurrence there followed those revelations of power within his own soul that made his subsequent career one of the most remarkable in the annals of the race.

The dullest and most indifferent dwellers on this earth to-day cannot fail to be aware that unusual occurrences are taking place around us, especially in the realm of psychic law and spiritual power. We have a more or less dim perception of the presence in our midst of miraculous burning bushes. The Society for Psychical Research sends forth reports of new and strange laws of hypnotic influence, telepathy, clairvoyance, and very strong hints of a possible means of telegraphy with a world of disembodied spirits. Claims of mental therapeutics in varied forms, notably in the form of Christian Science, are setting forth a healing force of mind that in

its cure of bodily ills goes far beyond the utmost calculations of medical science. From certain phases of Christian and non-Christian mysticism come interesting suggestions of spiritual insight and victory over the world that greatly surpass the spiritual experience of the average man and woman. For various reasons we ourselves may not be willing to *turn aside* to investigate these psychic and spiritual wonders, or to inquire if for us they have any word of help or healing. They may not seem to us quite respectable, and our interest in them might jeopardize our standing as a safe and sane member of society. Or it may be that life is so good to us already, and the ordinary revelations of the common day are so satisfying, that we do not care to inquire how the resources of life may be any further extended. Or it is barely possible that, in spite of all the apparently authentic testimony that may come to us, we cannot get rid of a prejudice that classes all these novelties with those abnormal and bizarre experiences to which human nature has always been more or less subject. At any rate, whatever be the motive, the majority of men and women have not yet *turned aside* to see what these modern marvels of mind and spirit mean, and if they are cited at all as an asset of human experience, they must be viewed more in the light of a future possibility than as a present attainment.

And yet if we should turn aside, dare any of us say what might happen even to us? Here are some cases of men as good and as intelligent as we, and possibly with prejudices as inveterate, who did turn aside: it is interesting, at least, to know what happened to them. A man who is possibly the foremost scientific scholar and thinker in England to-day has recently gone out of his ordinary course of scientific inquiry to gain some knowledge of certain phases of alleged psychic power. It must be of some significance to us that this man, Sir Oliver Lodge, claims to have had revealed to him some psychic truth sufficient to change radically his previous conceptions of life and its nature and destiny. One of the most sane and rational men of the writer's acquaintance, a thorough-going agnostic in philosophy and religion, placing himself almost by accident under certain mental conditions, came out of them with an experience of physical healing though the influence of thought which he soberly declared has revolutionized his whole theory of existence. Another acquaintance, of the same undoubted intelligence, in this case temperamentally materialistic in his interpretation of the universe, happened to come under the influence of a certain type of eastern mysticism, and whatever he there experienced, it is apparent to all who know him that the change wrought by that influence in his estimates of life's values was radical and complete. Is

it possible that we, the most self-satisfied and creed-bound of us all, can consider thoughtfully these, and scores of other cases like them that might be cited, and not believe that life may have larger meanings and broader outlooks than we have yet known? That is the significance they have, certainly, for all those who sympathize with this pragmatic principle in religion. To such, revelation is not a gift of the past, nor is life itself in any sense a finished and known attainment. It is nothing but a *continuously expanding experience*. With all we do know of him, man is essentially an unknown quantity still. The genius of Walt Whitman more than once discerned this unfathomable significance of life, and nowhere is this vision so clear as in his poem entitled "To You," quoted by another in this connection, the "You" meaning any reader or hearer of the verses.

"None have understood you, but I understand you;
None have done justice to you—you have not done
justice to yourself;
None but have found you imperfect—I only find no
imperfection in you.

"Oh, I could sing such glories and grandeur above
you;
You have not known what you are—you have slum-
bered upon yourself all your life;
What you have done returns already in mockeries.

"But the mockeries are not you;
Underneath them and within them, I see you lurk,
I pursue you where none else has pursued you."

It ought to be accepted as a truism that the value of any revelation depends upon man's capacity to perceive and understand it. The printed programme of a proposed entertainment may have a certain interest in itself. It may give us some pleasure to read it over and let the imagination dwell on the things that are in store for us. But the programme is not the entertainment. That comes only when, with our own clear eye we see, and with our own developed ear we hear, and with our own understanding heart we comprehend whatever of harmony, beauty, and grandeur the entertainment presents. That is why reason alone can never give any satisfactory revelation of the meaning and purpose of existence. All such pretended revelations are nothing but printed programmes. The programmes themselves may have their uses. Our Haeckels who, with their monistic schemes claim to have solved the riddle of the universe, are significant as a necessary phase of human thought. Our Royces with their systems of philosophic idealism are needful, if for nothing more than to show how far reason may go in its attempt to grasp absolute realities. Our theologies that, with their supernatural reve-

lations assume to answer every question that the soul can ask may be helpful and comforting as a temporary support of faith. But these, at their best, can never be more than the mere outline, the cold and formal statement of revelation. They can never be a substitute for the Reality any more than the printed programme can be a substitute for the entertainment. Revelation comes through life, and life alone. Shall we ever know more than we do now about man and his destiny? Shall we always be just the kind of agnostics we are at present, professing precisely the same limitations of knowledge? It depends wholly upon life itself and its developing capacities. Man himself is the measure of his universe, and he has reason to believe that his universe is all the universe there is. Knowledge will grow with his growth. Man is not a planet shining with a reflected light, but a star sending forth from within all the light it will ever have. How intense and penetrating that light may sometimes be only he who claims to have fully fathomed the depths of the human soul can say. But most of us are modest enough to confess that we do not know what new light may yet break forth out of that mysterious Word written in human nature, and are grateful for any new rays that now and then seem to illumine a little more the surrounding darkness.

If we should strive to count the books that have been written in the last few centuries at-

tempting to expound theological doctrines, or impart religious instruction, we should find their number is legion. It remained for our time, however, to produce a type of religious writing that deserves more than any other the name "scientific." In these books, notably that of Professor William James entitled, "Varieties of Religious Experience," we have an attempt to collate and classify certain types of human life produced by varied religious beliefs and ideals. As a naturalist tells what he sees as a manifestation of life in the vegetable and animal world and presents them for your contemplation, so these writers tell what they see as a manifestation of the religious life in men, and present it to the reader with little or no accompanying theory or comment. It is a bare statement of facts. These facts were that a deep religious conviction in one case increased the courage to endure hardships, in another aroused enthusiasm for altruistic service, in another imparted inner peace and quiet, in another endowed the spirit with a power of almost supernatural vision and insight. These attempts to present religious phenomena in such an objective, scientific form were criticised, of course, especially by those who still accept religion not as a life but as a dogma. But to most of us that way of presenting religious truth was refreshing and even inspiring. What was its real significance? For the first time religion seemed to give to the world, not

a doctrine or statement of opinion, but an open field for experience and discovery. Come, these books seem to say, do you really want to solve life's problems? Do you truly long to throw more light on the mystery by which you are surrounded? Here is the way, then, the way of *experience*. Paths still untrodden spread out before you. Moral heights still unattained tower above you. Spiritual powers still unawakened slumber within you. That is what pragmatism is, applied to religion. It presents the religious life not as a dogma, but as an invitation. All its revelations are the revelations of spiritual growth and inner unfolding, and whatsoever of insight and authority it denies to reason it restores in double measure to the as yet unbounded possibilities of experience.

IV

LIFE UNDER ORDERS

"Our apprehension of the Real, our comprehension of the True, is always effected by beings who are aiming at the attainment of some Good, and it seems a palpable absurdity to deny that this fact makes a stupendous difference."

F. C. S. Schiller.

A man whose personal history is familiar to the writer of these pages has pursued a course of action that is not easily explained on the mere assumption that happiness is the ultimate motive of all human action. With no advantages of wealth or social position, but endowed by Nature with good health and an inexhaustible fund of hope and good-cheer, life appeared to him in his earlier years as a rich store-house of good things open to his endeavor. Education, wealth, fame, the joys of family life, the privileges of travel, and the leisure to gratify the sense of the beautiful in Nature and art, all these legitimate aims of life invited him to their pursuit with a more than usual sense of pleasant anticipation. There was a time in those days of youth when these objects of ambition seemed good to him, and life itself seemed good wholly because it contained such possibilities of experience. Right into the

midst of these joyful anticipations, however, there came the obligation to make one of those strange choices which introduce so much of complexity, and yet so much of deeper meaning into this affair of living. That choice came in the clear and unmistakable command of duty. Should he pursue life's natural ambitions, or should he renounce them in order to be faithful to certain other lives that all at once became dependent on him for support and comfort? The choice was not made without deliberation and debate. Was not the fulfillment of his own life and its aims more important than to bear the burdens of others whose only claim on him was that of kinship? The argument seemed plausible, and yet, in the face of all such reasoning, in the face of the advice of friends pointing in the same direction, the choice was finally made in favor of duty and its irresistible imperative. Happily the alternative did not prove to involve such momentous issues as at first appeared. Along with the obligations imposed came, more toilsomely and much postponed in years, many of the prizes upon which at first the heart was set with such eager longing. And yet, constrained by a purely moral imperative, the fact still remains that life in this case assumed a vastly different course and content than it would have assumed had it been left free to pursue the more primitive dictates of nature.

It happens that the man whose moral history

is here briefly detailed has made himself somewhat acquainted with the various ethical theories which have been devised by the minds of men. What was that voice of duty that came to him in those early years, rudely interrupting the natural course of life? When and how did it come into the stream of animal gratification, turning that stream aside and so strangely changing its direction? What authority over life had this word "ought" in the presence of all other demands of his nature, and on what grounds can so obtrusive an authority be recognized? With a personal interest in these rational problems in connection with the moral law, he has read with intense interest the answers given by the moral philosophers. He has listened with intellectual assent as the evolutionists have told how, out of the mere act of living together in society, there grew up a body of mutual concessions and agreements which primitive man found it necessary to observe in order to enjoy the greater privileges that come with collective action; how those individual restrictions for the good of the whole, observed for ages, gradually developed through inheritance into a law of life or an element in the very structure of the human mind. Or, he has turned from these and similar naturalistic accounts, not without some intellectual assent, also, to the numerous idealistic or theistic explanations of the moral imperative. He has sympathized much with the

assertion that through the moral law man rises from the world of matter and sense to the supersensual world of spirit. And even when the voice of conscience is said to be nothing less than the voice of the Eternal, he has found his heart, if not his head, responding to that explanation, so transcending as it does all natural understanding. And yet, shining through all these more or less confused and shadowy attempts at ethical theory, there is one clear light that has guided, and ever will guide this seeker after the truth in regard to the moral life of man. That ray of unmistakable light is furnished by his own experience. He knows that somewhere his life was taken hold of by a moral ideal. He knows that from that moment all the "goods" of life became subordinate to one "Good" which it became supremely worth his while to follow. He knows that in the act of following that supreme Good his life has taken on a quality or meaning which he believes it could not have taken on had he followed the more immediate aims that at first seemed so inviting. Accepting the moral command not so much as a fact to be explained as a voice of authority to be obeyed, he has found that experience itself has brought an explanation quite sufficient for his needs. And if ever in the future he should doubt or question the validity of moral truth, he would much prefer to fall back on the testimony of his own experience than on any argu-

ments presented by the various theories through which that moral truth is affirmed.

There are moments of mental relaxation when the world presents itself as a vast multiplicity of objects and interests that bewilder us with their profusion. It is the impression we get as we go into a huge library which we would like to use but do not quite know how to. We wish sometimes that it did not contain so many books, or that the books would range themselves into one or two main subjects, so that we could get at them a little more easily. What is the difficulty here? Certainly the fault is not with the library. The fact is, that in order to make the best use of a library, we must come to it with a *purpose*. To the man whose bent is exclusively scientific the library is a great storehouse of scientific information. To the devoted theologian the collection narrows itself down to a series of the theological studies. To the lover of fiction, the student of art, the reader with a taste for history, to all according to their several purposes, the library assumes a definiteness and unity that adds immensely to its value. That is, their purpose determines *what that library means* to them, and unless it has some such definite meaning, as far as they are concerned it practically has no existence.

Now the pragmatist insists that, in order to exist, the world must have a *meaning*, and that meaning is there only so far as the purpose

of the individual man or woman puts it there. What is the world in itself? Vaguely conceived as such, it is nothing but a meaningless chaos. Whether or not it means something to a Supreme Mind, that is, whether or not the chaos is converted into a cosmos through the thought of the Infinite Purpose, it is not necessary here to determine. Assuming that all the mind we know is finite mind, we do find *man* putting his meanings into the chaos. Darwin comes with his scientific purpose, and the chaos arranges itself to him as a well ordered and connected whole, satisfying his rational demands. Plato comes with his ideas of the reason, and the chaos takes on the shape of his idealism. Shakespeare appears and, behold, the world assumes the form of romance and beauty. A Jesus is born, and once more we see this same disordered world transformed into a prospective kingdom of heaven. What is the true world, that of Darwin, Plato, Shakespeare, or Jesus? Can any one of these purposes express the whole meaning of life? Can they all together express it when merely added one to the other? Or is there one supreme Purpose that gathers them up into itself and unites them all? The moral consciousness of mankind declares that there is such a supreme Purpose through which the world must be interpreted, and that that Purpose presents itself in the form of the moral ideal. In its pursuit of the "Good" the soul puts the

highest meaning into the world that it can know or appreciate. It demands that all other meanings shall conform to this. The search for truth cannot escape from the eternal law of right. The effort to create beauty is vain if divorced from all regard for moral beauty. The True and the Beautiful cannot be imagined apart from the Good.

Is there any truth in the statement that this is a moral universe? Is there any sense in which Nature itself is subjected to ethical law? Was it pure poetic license or was it the expression of a deep truth when Wordsworth identified duty with the ruling forces of the cosmos?

"Thou [Duty] dost preserve the stars from wrong,
And the most ancient heavens through thee are
fresh and strong."

In opposition to this moral conception of the universe there seem to be many voices lifted up at the present time. No one, for instance, has pleaded more earnestly for a scientific view of Nature, apparently separated from all human and personal elements than Thomas Henry Huxley. Most of us agree with him when he insists that natural law is not interrupted by miracles in the interest of human welfare, nor is the impersonal order of the universe in any degree altered in response to man's prayers and entreaties. We go with him also when he declares that the only attitude in which we can approach the

study of Nature's secrets is the attitude of the modest and humble learner. We must not seek what we think *ought* to be or what we *wish* to be the fact, but we must seek what *is* the fact. Nature, says this English scientist, is not only impersonal, but it is wholly non-moral, and unless we go to her with that understanding we shall never be able to read what is written in the wonderful volume she is unfolding.

We admit, of course, that because men have gone to Nature in this purely unprejudiced and teachable spirit they have been able to give us that great body of scientific truth of which we are so proud. And yet, assuming the most impersonal and indifferent attitude we may, can we rid our study of Nature wholly of anthropomorphism? The very fact that the world stands there for us, and has meaning only as it is open to our contemplations, brings it within the scope of human interests. That scientific motive in the mind of Huxley, that disinterested method itself which we commend in him as good, and whose results we admire,—what is that but to find in Nature a confirmation of our moral aspirations? Indeed, there are passages in Huxley's writings where he sees not only this inevitable humanistic element even in the coldest scientific method, but sees also at times a moral significance in the universe in spite of his professed indifference. In one of his essays he speaks of Science as a Cinderella who, he says,

"lights the fire, sweeps the house, and provides the dinner; and is rewarded by being told that she is a base creature, devoted to low and material interests. But in her garret she has fairy visions out of the ken of the pair of shrews (theology and philosophy) who are quarreling downstairs. She sees the order which pervades the seeming disorder of the world, the great drama of evolution, with its full share of pity and terror, but also with abundant goodness and beauty, unrolls itself before her eyes, and she learns in her heart of hearts the lesson that the foundation of morality is to have done, once and for all, with lying; to give up pretending to believe that for which there is no evidence, and repeating unintelligible propositions about things beyond the possibilities of knowledge. She [Science] knows," he adds, "that the safety of morality lies neither in the adoption of this or that philosophical speculation, or this or that philosophical creed, but in a real and living belief in that fixed order of Nature which sends social disorganization upon the tracks of immorality as surely as it sends physical disease after physical trespasses. And of that firm and lively faith it is her high mission to be the priestess."

Is it possible to read these words of one of the greatest apostles of the gospel of science and not see that what we call scientific truth is permeated through and through with a human-

istic meaning? Not only in this but in other utterances of the same writer we seem to see the scientist transformed into the man. We see beyond the intellectual interest in the world he is studying, the moral interest, that passionate love of truth and that eagerness for the highest welfare of humanity which he could never quite separate from his devoted quest of knowledge. In no man was the faith stronger that the outward world is rational throughout, and would be found to respond to all the demands of our intellectual needs. In none was there more implicit confidence that the truth can be trusted, and that no revelations of Nature will ever be found essentially at war with the highest interests of the human soul. In other words, this man saw through the eye of the *intellect* that subtle alliance of Nature and life, that unity of man's aims and purposes, with the aims and purpose of the universe, that poet and seer have seen with the eye of *intuition*. Both Huxley and Wordsworth saw that the world itself is here for human uses, and that Nature must ever lend itself to the advancement of man's ethical purposes. No man, be he scientist or poet, was ever taken possession of by the moral ideal, or ever, through the passion for righteousness, was illumined by the ethical vision, without some sense of this moral order of the universe. To him all science is inseparable from morality. To him all truth is human and cannot be thought of aside from

some good posited by human needs and cravings. To him the very stars in their courses do fight against Sisera and with something more than a poetic meaning does he respond to these words of our great American Seer:

"I look for the new Teacher that shall follow so far those shining laws, that he shall see them come full circle; shall see their rounding complete grace; shall see the world to be the mirror of the soul, shall see the identity of the law of gravitation with purity of heart; and shall show that the Ought, that Duty, is one thing with Science, with Beauty, and with Joy."

If the study of natural science is thus becoming humanized, much more so is the study of history. There was a time when the records of man's life on earth were written as little more than a chronicle of events. When the historian had laid before his readers the dates of epoch-making battles, or the bare statement of the rise and fall of dynasties, he thought his task was accomplished. To-day, however, no historian is equipped for his task who is not a deep student of the evolutionary process and a moral philosopher. In these modern times we all have a deep-seated faith that "through the ages one unceasing purpose runs," and all history to us is shallow and worthless that does not at least try to trace that purpose. We love to read how from "Nature red in tooth and claw," man came forth adding more rational and human instincts

to the life of the brute. We never tire of learning how, slowly but steadily, from the savage up, right and justice won the victory over wrong and injustice; how, little by little, might, ceasing to make right, yielded to the higher demands of a developing conscience. What a fascinating story is that of the growth of the spirit of liberty in the world, that growth that, through bloodshed and martyrdom, has put down innumerable forms of tyranny and oppression, and has emerged to-day, the one clear and permanent victory of our modern age. Or perhaps, as Carlyle suggests, this unceasing moral purpose can be discerned less in history than in biography. We like to look back and see how, like lofty mountain peaks, some men here and there along the way have towered in moral grandeur above the age in which they lived. Evolution was a long time in producing a Moses, an Isaiah, a Socrates, a Plato, a Marcus Aurelius. It was still longer in bringing forth a Bright and a Gladstone, a Washington and a Lincoln. But we cannot help feeling that all along through the ages a moral sentiment and a standard of character was growing among the masses that made possible these, and the thousands of other moral heroes that make the records of human history so inspiring. That moral sentiment and those high standards of character were never so much in evidence all along the line as they are in the twentieth century. "Step by step since

time began" we see this "steady gain," not of "men" but of "man." And there are prophetic voices among us which tell of a time not far distant when the race itself shall have risen to a moral height so much on a level with its heroes that these shall no longer be conspicuous in their isolation.

All history worthy of the name then, is moral history. It is the record of man's slow and toilsome pursuit through all the ages of that supreme Good, more or less in conflict with the other "goods," that have won his desires. To trace that purpose the pragmatist in religion reads history and finds in it instruction and inspiration. Not that alone. To detect the pursuit of the Good he studies all the life of the present and reads all the signs of the times. He sees in the so-called social unrest of the day the stirrings of an awakening moral consciousness such as the world has never known before. He sees in the attack on established customs and time-honored social institutions a possible new birth of an ethical idealism that in the end may carry the world forward to a new and higher order. He sees in the very pessimism of this modern age, the very despair of reform and improvement, nothing but the prophecy of an aroused ethical sense, and the clearer promise of a better day that will surely come when all good men will match their creed with their deed. We are making history to-day faster and on a larger scale

than it was ever made before. To the humanist therefore, actually sensitive to the presence of these ethical currents that fill the air he breathes, "to be alive is glorious, to be young is very heaven."

In a former chapter we made an effort to look at life reduced to its simplest terms. We found those simplest terms, it may be remembered, in the natural, healthy animal existence where every faculty of the soul has free play and complete and harmonious development. Such life, we found, was always joyous, always full of satisfaction. What becomes of that life of Nature, now, turned into these ethical channels? How is that same essential life affected by its pursuit of the Good? There have not been wanting voices all down through the centuries, there are not wanting voices to-day, that in the alleged interests of life and life more abundant call into question the turning of life into that straight and narrow way of duty which the traditions and customs of past generations have created. A protest now and then from the epicurean strain in human nature that, from the Hebrew preacher down to the present, claims that man can do nothing better than to eat, drink, and be merry; the opposition of wrong and injustice itself that often enthroned in high places, defends its position with sneers at the folly of the ethical idealists; the antagonism of those whose business it has been in all times to cater to the lower instincts of human-

ity;—all this enmity the moral sentiment has had to meet and contend with. This accounts for that slow and toilsome progress it has made. But occasionally, life in this pursuit of the good, has had to face more serious and threatening attacks. We all remember when, a score or more years ago, Nordan's book on "Degeneration" appeared, protesting against what appeared to the author abnormal and unwholesome tendencies in modern literature, art, and philosophy. If we designate as "degenerate" all the immoral directions of thought which he there enumerates, together with later forms of ethical scepticism, we might easily dispose of all these threatening moral evils. But the ethical radicalism of our day cannot be so easily disposed of. It comes to great masses of people who have at any rate every appearance of health and sanity. Many writers to-day are gaining the ears of the multitude with revolutionary ethical doctrines that would tear down the fair fabric of customs and institutions which the race has been centuries in building. Others are spreading among the people certain theories of the non-existence of moral evil which, taken seriously, would be productive of nothing less than a fatal moral lethargy. So far as these attack only the transient forms which the pursuit of the Good may assume, we may not have much to fear. But from England and Germany especially come widespread literary influences that not only make an assault upon the most sacred institutions of

what we call a Christian civilization, but aim their attacks at what we have considered the essential springs of all moral endeavor. In an age when men are fairly revelling in the freedom of thought that at last has been given them, it is not strange that everything should be called into question and we can hardly expect that the authority and value of these diviner instincts of the soul will be spared from the searching rays of enlightened reason.

With what weapons can the pragmatic method meet these attacks of ethical scepticism? It can bring no thunders of Sinai to overawe an infidelity and apostasy so blasphemous. It cannot proclaim the moral law as the absolute Will of the Omnipotent, and threaten with divine wrath and punishment all those who presume to doubt its authority. The practical method in religion cannot even produce an ethical theory which it can dogmatically impose on others, and refute with it their sceptical arguments. Its ethical defense is wholly an appeal to experience. See what this pursuit of the supreme Good has done for man in the past. Behold how it has led him out of barbarism into the privileges of civilization. Behold how with growing moral insight mankind's horizons have been widened, its customs and institutions ennobled and beautified, its social relations broadened and sweetened. Behold, again, how this following of the moral ideal has exalted and glorified individual lives.

"There are who ask not if Thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth;
Glad hearts! without reproach or blot;
Who do Thy work, and know it not;
May joy be theirs while life shall last!
And Thou, if they should totter,
Teach them to stand fast!"

Can we not trust so deep-seated, so sweetly beneficent a law of life to the keeping of the race? It has already proved its worth. It has abundantly shown that through obedience to it, and through that obedience alone, can man now reach that joy of existence, that fulness of life which at first man attained under conditions more simple. Out of the Eden of unconscious innocence man has come forth, never more to return. Guided by the nobler voice of moral aspiration, he must now seek a grander and more beautiful paradise. As such a guide the vision of the supreme Good has taken its place as one of the enduring faculties of the soul. If "beauty is its own excuse for being," and the æsthetic sense needs no further explanation than its own existence, then the good is its own excuse for being, and the thirst for righteousness requires no labored defense of reason. Man lives and has his being in a moral world just as truly as he lives and has his being in a world of beauty. We do not fear that any æsthetic scepticism will ever permanently de-

stroy that sense in man by which he is ever transfiguring Nature with a radiance it does not itself contain; why should we fear that any moral scepticism will ever permanently destroy that sense by which the world is evermore transfigured by the even diviner radiance of a spirit at one with itself and with the deepest law of its being? If every temporary turning aside of man from his pursuit of the Beautiful is followed by an æsthetic renaissance, shall we not believe that in every age when man seems to turn aside from the pursuit of the Good there is a force somewhere hidden in the spiritual nature of man that will just as surely turn him back again, the tide of moral attainment rising higher and higher with every receding wave of indifference?

"I slept, and dreamed that life was beauty;
I woke,—and found that life was duty.
Was my dream, then, a shadowy lie?
Toil on, sad heart, courageously;
And thou shalt find thy dream shall be
A noon-day light and truth to thee."

LIFE SHARED

In dealing with such a complex and subtle affair as Life it is not always easy to distinguish clearly between the statement of a fact about which there can be no dispute and the statement of a theory concerning which thoughtful men may differ. Suppose, for example, at the opera some night we see a vast audience aroused to the highest pitch of delight and enthusiasm over one of Wagner's masterpieces rendered by a company of exceptionally fine artists. Keeping within the bounds of unquestionable fact, we could say, at least, that such a manifestation of feeling on the part of so many men and women indicated that musical appreciation was a highly developed element in human nature. If we should attempt to tell how this taste for harmonious sounds came thus to be so important a part of life; or if we should try to account for this form of enjoyment on psychological grounds, we should find ourselves in the realm of theory where our statements are more or less debatable. But we can say a vast deal about music, and not go beyond the sure ground of fact. We can say that a taste for this form of art has now incorporated itself as a part of the structure of the human animal. We can assert that, contrasted with the meagre beginnings

or the cruder taste of primitive man, the growth of musical capacity and appreciation has produced an important, if not a radical change in the structure of the human mind and will. And still within the limits of undisputed fact, we can affirm that, once coming into life this love for the "concord of sweet sounds" has come to stay, and no scheme of civilized life in the future can succeed that does not reckon with, and provide for, this as one of the factors determining human conduct.

Passing, now, from that audience so deeply moved at the opera house, we become part of another large assembly equally aroused by a different kind of appeal to the emotions. Here a great concourse of men and women are listening to a plain man telling a simple story of his efforts to relieve the suffering, and make life more endurable, for some humble fishermen, inhabitants of the bleak and barren coasts of Labrador. They hang on the words of this earnest missionary as he tells of the hard conditions of life and the needs of these human beings in that far-away land. Their hearts glow with sympathy, and their wills respond with generous gifts in response to the stirring appeal, and they are glad that through this heroic missionary they have an opportunity to share something of their own blessings with a less-favored people. What is the simple, undisputed fact that this manifestation of interest in the welfare of a distant race of human beings indicates?

It is the fact that there is an altruistic element in human nature, a feature of life at the present time as unmistakable and prominent as the love of music. The fact will vary in power and universality with the breadth of observation and the degree of social instinct in the individual himself. And yet the most casual observer whose own life is at the same time most self-centered, cannot fail to see the wonderful manifestations of this altruistic sentiment in our twentieth century civilization. Simultaneously with the development of a vast material well-being and colossal individual fortunes has gone the development of charitable, philanthropic and socialistic institutions such as the world has never known. Cities and towns in every civilized nation are filled with asylums, hospitals and homes built for the help of needy human beings and the alleviation of their miseries. Philanthropies of every kind, from neighborhood settlements in the city slums to extensive foreign missions, are revealing the eagerness with which men long to share their own gifts of light and joy with those who sit in any kind of darkness. Reform movements of every description, aiming at some form of social betterment, are as prominent a feature of our modern life as our present greed of gain and business enterprise. This altruistic impulse, indeed, has appeared in halls of legislation, and in countless laws intended to defend the weak against the strong and to provide for the welfare and happiness of the poor,

government itself in varied socialistic enactments has insisted on a more equitable distribution of wealth and privilege. In all this we see the outward expression of an inner fact, a fact as unmistakable to the candid beholder as any fact of nature. That fact is that in this present stage of his evolution man is constitutionally and incurably altruistic. Whatever he may have been able to do in the past, or whatever individual men may here and there be able to do in the present, man, generally speaking, can now never live unto himself alone. The life that is shared with other lives is the only possible kind of life that in this age can aspire to fulness and satisfaction. You might as well try to eradicate the musical impulse from human nature or deny its existence as to take from man his care for others or ignore its presence. It is a factor in the human soul that must more and more be reckoned with. Any system of political economy, any form of government, any new phase of religion that does not build on this truth that man is by nature his brother's keeper fails to recognize the most dominant human note of our twentieth century civilization, and will surely be left behind in that growth of the social consciousness which is becoming more and more marked with every passing decade.

Nearly a score of years ago the thinking world was interested in a new book which pretended to

lay down conditions of social progress of rather an alarming nature. In his work entitled, "Social Evolution," Mr. Benjamin Kidd drew our attention to the fact that the principle of evolution as it manifests itself in society means the increasing predominance of reason over instinct and feeling. In a long and elaborate argument he tries to show that evolution, thus left alone, working through the universal law of natural selection and the survival of the fittest, would produce a race of rational human beings in whom the natural affections and social instincts would become proportionately weak and less powerful a factor in conduct. He cites the influence of rationalism, for instance, on the parental instinct, which he admits to be a form of altruistic feeling with its beginnings in the earliest dawn of life and strengthened "through all those countless æons of time through which we rise from the lowest organisms upward to man." Even this instinct, he declares, is being perverted and partly suspended under the influence of a highly developed intellectual life. He quotes from our current literature a statement that, "there is something pathetically absurd in this sacrifice to their children of generation after generation of grown people." Not only thus, he asserts, is an unrestricted rationalism modifying that institution of marriage and the family which is so essential to social evolution, but still more,

is it modifying those weaker social instincts on whose presence we depend for growing coöperation and equality in the future.

Very alarming, indeed, to this writer, would be the prospect for humanity were it not for one influence ever tending to hold in check and counteract the destructive power of rationalism. That is the influence of religion, in this case some form of supernatural or revealed religion. Through religious faith alone, and through obedience to commands believed to be superhuman and laws accepted as divine, can man ever be induced to repudiate the self-regarding dictates of reason, and practice that self-sacrifice and renunciation required if society is ever to attain a higher state of organized well-being.

The attitude of this writer is mentioned here as the illustration of a method that is diametrically opposed to that humanistic attitude which is becoming so prominent a feature of modern thought. It is nearly twenty years since Mr. Kidd's book appeared. The course which events have taken in that period would itself be a sufficient refutation of the arguments which the writer put forward. Along with the usual developments of rationalism which those years have witnessed has gone a more rapid growth in social consciousness and a more remarkable progress in all forms of collective action than has appeared in a like period in any past times. This, too, accompanied not by the increase, but by the un-

doubted decline of that form of supernatural religion which Mr. Kidd relied upon as his only hope of social salvation. There are two facts that distinguish this age, which must be obvious to the most shallow and to the most prejudiced observer. The first is the decay of creeds, and the loosening of those religious ties that have held the people to certain religious ideals in the past. The second fact is that with this apparent decay of religious faith there has grown up an impulse toward social service that itself has all the ardor and enthusiasm of the old-time religion. Where do we find the agnostics to-day joining hands with the believers in hearty coöperation? Where do we find many a man who has turned his back upon the church united again with the efforts of the institution which he has abandoned? Is it not in those forms of activity in which the believers and the churches forget their creeds and give themselves to some sort of philanthropic and social effort? The great battle-cry of religion itself to-day is "service." Through that battle-cry it is winning back thousands to whom its doctrinal beliefs no longer appeal. In other words religion itself is becoming humanized. No longer individual salvation, but social salvation is the end which it has in view. Mr. Kidd and all other reactionary writers notwithstanding, rationalism, so far from placing a fatal blight on the social instincts, has seemed to do nothing more harmful than to turn aside the

stream of religious thought and feeling from useless creed and form into the more productive channel of faith in the brotherhood of man and a growing enthusiasm toward an idealism that is purely social in its nature.

So wonderful has this development of the social consciousness been in our day that thoughtful observers have been forced to make a new definition of the individual life. Herbert Spencer in his "Data of Ethics" suggested this larger conception of individualism when he professed to see in the process of social evolution going on around us a conciliation taking place "between the interests of each citizen and the interests of citizens at large, tending ever towards a state in which the two become merged in one, and in which the feelings answering to them respectively fall into complete concord." Assuming that the interests of each and the interests of all are merged in one, what then becomes of our old idea of individuality? Can it retain any longer that element of isolation or self-centered independence that it formerly held? To the superficial observer a plant or a tree seems to possess individuality in this isolated sense. But anyone with the slightest knowledge of plant life knows that such separation is only apparent. The individual plant or tree has no existence aside from the soil, the atmosphere, the light and the warmth from which its own life is derived, and in which it is in a certain sense submerged and identified.

So it is only to the most superficial thought that any man or woman can be regarded as an absolutely separated individual. Parents *live for* their children, and so far as the children are impelled by filial affection they *live for* their parents. The lover, to the extent and depth of his passion, merges his own life in that of the maiden who has captivated him, and so far as she responds, their lives are made one in a deeper sense than any marriage rite can express. The philanthropist who gives his life to some great cause of human betterment, the hero who ventures his life for others, the martyr who sacrifices himself for the cause of human rights and liberty, all these actions cannot possibly be accounted for except on the assumption that the aim of each could never be separated from the aim of the whole. Outwardly, of course, all must recognize the sources outside of himself on which his own life is dependent. Through other lives we came into the world, and on these we had to rely for care and protection through the helpless years of infancy. We are part of a social organism through whose industrial, intellectual and spiritual agencies we are provided with the very necessities of life and happiness. But we are coming to see that not only outwardly, but inwardly, is our own life merged in the life of others. The plant that separates itself from its environment fades and dies. The plant that absorbs the life-giving forces in which it lives enlarges its own

life and seems to take on even a grander and more striking individuality. That is the way of enlarged life for the plant: that is the way and the only way of enlarged life for man. The sources of human individuality are subtle, mystic in their nature. The separated life is life at its lowest ebb of consciousness. The absolute hermit, if such a being were possible, would mean death to all that makes life worth living. Selfishness is nothing less than suicide. The deepest truth that experience itself has brought to us in this later age comes in the form of a paradox. We must lose our life to find it. There is no way out of that now. The old individualism is gone forever. Every attempt to resuscitate that antiquated idea of man in his isolated, self-centered character, whether the attempt come in the form of economic, political, or religious doctrine, is doomed to certain failure. The individual life is much bigger and more inclusive than men have formerly dreamed. Each is now a mirror of the whole. His needs and aspirations are inseparable from the needs and aspirations of humanity. Fulness of life for him can never be realized except in the fulness of life for all. Dim or clear, in the gray twilight of instinct, or in the noon-day light of conscious conviction, that new conception of an all-inclusive individuality is the revelation of an advanced stage of evolution, a revelation that is pregnant with untold issues for the coming generations.

In the earlier European wars it often happened that an invading army took possession of some ancient monastery, and converted it into a temporary barrack. There is something pathetic in such an intrusion of worldly force and turmoil into those quiet halls of contemplation and worship. For ages those walls had heard nothing but the voice of prayer and praise, and the inmates had almost forgotten that there was outside of them a great, rough, noisy world such as this rude soldiery represented. So painful is the contact of these two worlds, the world of contemplation and the world of action, that we could almost wish that the two could have gone on, each in its own way, the one never conscious of the other's existence.

With something of the same pathos we see the great rough world with its practical social problems invading the sacred precincts of the church, and challenging it to come out of its quiet air of worship, and take a hand in the work of social reconstruction. The church has in all past ages, it is true, pursued its quiet course of prayer and praise in the midst of a world of poverty and suffering, and of social inequality and injustice. With its service of worship and its holy voice of aspiration, indeed, religion has gone on its way oblivious to even louder cries of distress and complaints of oppression from the people in former times than are heard at the present. And yet, never did the church and religion exist amid such

widespread and articulate social unrest as it does to-day. Doubtless it is because this age is more conscious of itself that it seems more filled than any other with social problems and widespread discontent. What will the church do about it? is the vital question of the hour. Will it pursue its ancient course of saving souls for another world, ignoring the sufferings and wrongs which disfigure the present? Will it continue to pray and worship in its quiet sanctuaries while all around it sounds the din of contending classes, the bitter strife of capital against labor, the unholy warfare between the oppressor and the oppressed? Will it go on praying for the kingdom of peace and good-will to come while all the time some who are uttering that prayer at the altar are, consciously or unconsciously, pursuing courses in the industrial and commercial world that make the coming of that kingdom impossible? These questions are vital, not only because they involve the interests of the social organism, but because they involve the very existence of the church itself. This is an eminently practical age, not in the worst, but in the best sense of that expression. It demands more and more that all institutions shall give an account of themselves not in terms of abstract theories or intellectual belief, but in terms of *life*. What is your religion good for? Does it contain any real gospel for the present age? Can it solve any of these pressing social problems before which thoughtful men and

women to-day are standing perplexed and anxious? If not, then it looks as if the church would sooner or later die, not from violence, but from sheer neglect. It may be true that there is a place in human nature for pure contemplation. Doubtless the instinct for worship will always find some form of social expression. For the exercise of these functions alone, the church may continue, but in years to come it will be a small and ever-diminishing company of cultivated spirits that will compose its hallowed communion. If in the future the church is to go into the world and preach the gospel to every creature, it must preach a gospel that is human through and through, aiming at the material as well as the spiritual salvation of all earth's children. It is a big task that religion has before it to-day—bigger than it has ever had before in all its history. It is the task of redeeming this present world, of making human society here and now over into something wholly just, and clean, and beautiful. Is there anything in religion or in the institutions in which it is now embodied, that gives us hope that it may be equal to the task?

Those who are most deeply interested in social progress, and at the same time most ardent believers in the church and its mission, have faith that religion can and will respond to this call for social regeneration. How far the church itself will aim directly to change the present industrial or social order, or how far it will advocate spe-

cial schemes of social reconstruction, this will depend on circumstances or the peculiar opportunities of individual religious societies. But there is one foundation on which all churches must come sooner or later to build in all their social efforts. That foundation is not, and cannot be, any theological dogma about which honest men may differ. It is nothing more nor less than the foundation that is already laid in human nature, that social consciousness of which we have been speaking, and which was never so deeply wrought into the structure of human life as it is to-day. Man is just beginning to awaken to a knowledge of his larger self. He is becoming dimly aware of that mystic relationship which makes his individual life not isolated but sublimely inclusive. It is just dawning upon him that there is no way of fulfilling his own life, no way, in fact, of saving his own soul, except as he aims at the fulfillment of all lives, the salvation of all souls. On this rock, a solid fact in human nature, let the church hereafter build. Its business shall be to stimulate and develop that sense of the oneness of all human life. Its one great aim shall be to send forth men and women into the world who shall find it more and more impossible to live unto themselves alone. Forth from the doors of the church shall come a growing multitude who shall represent a new type of human character. In all their conduct their first thought shall be, not what can I do for myself, but what can I do to

increase the happiness and welfare of others? In every transaction they shall ask, not, how can I get the better of this man with whom I deal, but how can I act so as to benefit him as well as myself? Everywhere, in business, in politics, on the street, in the home, this new kind of man, or woman, not in any forced way, but naturally and spontaneously, shall deal with men in the spirit of perfect good-will, the good-will that delights in another's happiness as if it were one's own. Can the church produce that kind of men and women? If it can, and we have great confidence in its power of education in this direction, then the church has the key, and the only key, for the solution of the social problems of our day. There is not one of the evils that oppress society at the present time that is not founded on human selfishness. Modify or suppress that narrow, self-seeking aim in individuals or in peoples, and all our industrial and international warfare, all our social injustice will cease. The salvation of the world is in the hands of that institution that can in any way lift man out of his smaller self into that larger self in which his own little life is made to share in the life of all. And so far as the church has that power of influence proceeding from its time-honored and sacred voices, it still has a mission vital and inspiring enough to command the homage and respect of humanity.

In an old Hindu legend it is related that a re-

ligious devotee, after a long life of holy aspiration and endeavor, was at last carried to the top of a high wall beyond which he caught sight of those regions of perfect peace for which all along he had been longing and striving. That supreme bliss seemed now to be open to his attainment. But something within him, it is said, still drew him back to the imperfect and restless world from which he had come. It was the thought of those human beings left there still to toil and suffer. And renouncing even this enchanting offer of his well-earned heaven, he returned again to take up anew his ministry of human help and healing.

This eastern tale but illustrates the truth slowly, but surely revealed to developing man that, for weal or for woe, all life is bound up together, and that no life can be lived at its best while it is content that any other lives should be lived at their worst. This is a fact, we claim, that is dependent on no religious dogma whatever. It is a plain fact, of experience. It is attested by the whole history of the race. That a man must lose his life in service in order to find it in larger and higher life for himself is not true because Jesus said it—it is true because it has been verified by those who have tried it throughout the whole range of human endeavor. Life shared is life gained. The more we give in sympathy, in love, and in brotherly good-will the more life we have in ourselves. The very height of manhood

or womanhood to which we can individually ascend is dependent on the height to which the race itself has ascended. This inspiring thought of the mysterious solidarity of humanity is well expressed by Browning:

"Man's self is not yet man,
Nor shall I deem his object served, his end
Attained, his genuine strength put fairly forth,
While only here and there a star dispels
The darkness, here and there a towering mind
O'erlooks its prostrate fellows. When the host
Is out at once, to the despair of night;
When all mankind alike is perfected,
Equal in full-blown powers,—then, not till then,
I say, begins man's general infancy."

VI

LIFE SPIRITUALIZED

Many visitors to the World's Fair in Chicago will recall a picture in the art exhibition entitled, "Breaking Home Ties." The painting represents a young man just turning his back on the scenes of his childhood to face the great, wide world and its unknown possibilities of experience. The homely walls and appointments of the farmhouse, the members of the household with tear-stained faces bidding the youth a tender farewell, the countenance of the boy himself with its mingled expression of sadness and hopefulness, all these gave this work of art a peculiar interest and pathos, which accounted doubtless for the great popularity it won in a collection which contained many paintings of greater artistic merit.

It did not require much imagination in the beholder to read the simple story which the picture told. Looking back a few years, one could see the happy, healthy boy in the full enjoyment of those natural pleasures which a country home alone can afford. One can imagine the days and years when the dear, familiar scenes of the old place, and the sweet companionships of those who were bound to him by family affection supplied every possible need of his nature and made him perfectly contented with his lot. But just as

easy is it to imagine also the time that came by and by when something appeared in the boy's mind and heart that broke up forever that dream of contentment. What was it in him that made the simple toil on the farm seem increasingly dull and commonplace? What was it that gradually destroyed the glamour and charm of the scenes in which he once delighted? What was it that somewhere in his consciousness revealed the narrowness and inadequacy of the life he was living there in the home of his childhood? Whatever that inner change was, it certainly was not a sign of a perverse or a degenerate nature. Remembering how many men of eminence, filling large places in the great affairs of the world, began life in just such country homes, we cannot regret that sense of discontent that awakens sometimes in the growing boy. If it means death to one phase of life it means the birth of a larger and a nobler phase. If it means the rather sad ending of one source of happiness, it means the opening up of other sources even more rich and abundant. The process of growth and development always involves more or less of tragedy. Man is ever dying in order to live. Never yet did he take one step forward without breaking some "home ties," that, once broken, may introduce him into a world of larger scope and nobler possibilities.

May we not take this painting as an allegory of the advent of the life of the spirit into the simple life of the senses with which man's life on

earth began? Here, again, we disclaim any intention of announcing a theory or explanation of what the spiritual life really is. No word is so misused at the present time as this word "spirituality." None is employed in so many different senses, and none is appropriated to support so many varied and opposing schemes and doctrines. Our aim here is to make the study of the theme wholly concrete and practical. What we strive to do is simply to watch life unfolding itself. Human life on this earth began we know with the simple, naïve life of the senses. There was a certain happiness and satisfaction in that purely animal existence so long as it was accompanied by contentment. Why that life of the senses could not have continued to satisfy man we do not know; we only know that it *did* not. Somewhere in the course of his evolution he began to be discontented. The possibility of new and larger worlds of experience began to manifest themselves to his consciousness. Intellectual cravings suggested realms of knowledge which he had not yet explored. The beginnings of the æsthetic life hinted at a supersensual world of art and beauty. The faint glimmerings of a moral ideal pointed to something beyond mere material gratification. The first vague discovery that human thought and will could overcome the hostile forces of the outward world revealed the possibility of an inner world as an aid in the struggle for existence. Slowly, through age af-

ter age, man thus came into possession of himself. The whole process of evolution was a process of continual revelation, one after another of the powers of mind and will coming forth from within with every age of contact with an outward world of matter. That is the simple process by which man has been spiritually developed. In the course of that evolution many "home ties" have been broken. The world of sense has lost for him much of its early charm, no longer able to yield its primitive satisfactions. The awakening of the life of the spirit has been accompanied by frequent disillusionings, while many a spectre of doubt and despair has threatened to destroy all life's values. And yet in no sane and healthy mind has there ever existed a doubt that every genuine advance in spiritual growth has in it the promise and potency of life larger and more abundant. The cure for the evils of liberty, it has been said, is more liberty. The cure for the evils of developing spiritual life is more spiritual life. The boy that leaves his home will sometime forget his sadness at the parting in the larger successes of the vaster world into which he is about to enter. If, in a life having realized a part only of its spiritual power, there is unrest, doubt and despair, it is because that realization is only partial; rest, strength and peace will surely come farther on in that unending journey.

The earliest awakening of a distinctively spiritual life seems to have come with the discovery

of the duality of life, the separation into subject and object. This discovery is in most cases gradual and unconscious, both in the development of the race and in that of the individual; but the present writer, in common with others, no doubt, thinks he can recall the very moment when that revelation came to him in the passage out of the instinctive life of childhood. At that precise point in time he knew himself for the first time separated from the world of objects around him. Up to that period he had been living in a blissful unity of experience. He and the world were one, his own thought and feeling took in and absorbed every outward object with which it came into contact. Now, however, there came a sudden cleavage. All at once the outward world stood opposite to him, with a strange sense of foreignness which never before had entered into his consciousness. It was a new birth, the first appearance of that mysterious entity which we vaguely call personality. Ever after that life has run along in two streams, the inner and the outer, each contributing to the general purpose of life itself, but never again mingling in one and the same channel.

Around this apparent fact of the duality of life have waged the fiercest battles of metaphysics. What is the relation between these two worlds, the world of mind on the one hand, and the world of matter on the other? Which was prior in time, thought or its object? Was the material world

first, and conscious existence but an incident in the creative process? Or does the whole outward universe exist only for thought, the existence of matter itself being inconceivable without a thinker? In other words, is the universe substantially spiritual or material? According as these questions are answered in favor of the inner world or the outer, we have a spiritual or a material interpretation of the universe.

Abandoning the logical solution of the problem to the metaphysicians, let us ask now if life itself has any answer that is at all satisfactory. We all know that there is a *practical* spiritualism as well as a *practical* materialism. Some men and women do live and have their being in the inner life of thought, sentiment, taste; some men and women just as truly live and have their being in the outer world of material wealth and power. In which kind of life lie the real living values? Has the process of evolution meant the progressive development of the subjective or of the objective side of human nature? If the human race is to go on progressing in the future as in the past will that progress be predominantly spiritual or material? Our human world is the only world we know, or can know, anything about. The final outcome of life itself must, therefore, throw all the light on the mystery that ever can be thrown. The question of spiritualism or materialism, must be settled practically or it can never be settled at all. Not to the logicians but

to those who live in the spirit must we look for the deepest truth on this important subject.

By a strange law of association man comes to transfer his own life to the object which was at first meant to express life or minister to its needs. All written symbols were originally modes of expressing human thought and sentiment. Yet in the worship of the letter of sacred scripture man seems to forget that original purpose, and reveres as an end in itself that which was purely a means. The sole object of food is to sustain physical existence: but, to the epicure that aim of life is obscured, and the delicacies of the table are used often to the injury of the body they were intended to benefit. The hoarded gold of the miser has lost for him all its primitive meaning as an instrument of life and happiness, and the material substance itself has taken the place of all that possible expansion of life which the gold might have brought in the hands of a man who knew how to use it. When we speak regretfully of present-day materialism is not that what we mean—that life has been transferred to its objects? Why is it that, with all our material wealth and luxury, there is yet so much unrest and dissatisfaction? Why is it that, with all our wonderful material progress, there is so much in our literature and art that expresses weariness and pessimism? Why is it that with comforts and conveniences of living surpassing in abundance and widespread distribution all former periods,

there is yet, running through all our modern civilization an undertone of discontent, and a half-articulate questioning whether life itself is worth the living? Is it not because the inner life has not kept pace with the outer life in this rapid development? We have come to associate life itself with those objects which were meant to be nothing but its means of expression. To material objects which are dead we have given over the precious treasures of mind and heart which alone have a living value. The practical materialism of the age has arrested the growth of life itself. We stand apparently stationary in the evolutionary process because, for a time the spirit seems to be in part, at least, submerged and lost in the letter.

The material world fails, then, to respond to life's deepest needs even when it pretends to minister to those needs. Still more strikingly does it fail when it seems directly to thwart life's aims. Meeting her on her own ground of physical force man is no match for Nature. The outward world not only stands opposite to the inner life, but it also assumes an attitude that is sometimes decidedly antagonistic. If we have ever been in a storm at sea we have been impressed then more than ever with the utter mercilessness of the elements, and the abject helplessness of the human will beyond a certain point of resistance. The same outward forces that work him good may also work him ill. Fire, flood, wind and wave are just as ready to bring destruction and suffer-

ing as to bring benefit and happiness. It is not without significance that we have called man's age-long effort to gain the favor of nature as the "struggle for existence." A struggle it has been all the way, and if, constantly on his guard to avoid disaster and escape the threatening ills of an inexorable material law, man has attained any security and happiness, it has often been not because of, but in spite of, that outward world in which he has lived and had his being.

There is a mountainous island on our rocky New England coast that in a single generation took on an entirely new value for human life. Up to seventy-five years ago the scant soil had yielded nothing but a bare physical existence for the humble farmers and fisher-folk that then inhabited it. Happily, some artist visitors began to make known to the world its bracing airs and the surpassing charm and beauty of its scenery. Since then countless men and women have delighted in the varied attractions of that single spot of earth, and the world itself has taken on an added beauty and worth because of that purely spiritual discovery.

Has not some such spiritual discovery as that marked all human progress in the past, and must it not continue to mark it in the future? We wait for the day to come when men will turn as eagerly to the work of converting their material wealth into real life values as they are now devoting themselves to mere acquisition. When

that time comes the successful business man will stop short in his impetuous career, and ask himself if it really pays to sacrifice life with all its varied, but fast-fleeting opportunities, to an aim so narrow and sordid. Then the multi-millionaire will not seek to rid himself of a useless burden by indiscriminate giving, but will study with infinite pains to restore for the happiness and welfare of all mankind those vast riches that society itself has enabled him to accumulate. Then all forms of outward wealth will mean nothing but opportunity for inward growth and expansion. The search for truth, the love of beauty in nature and art, the enthusiasm for humanity, the passion for the ideal, the glow of hope and aspiration, all these, growing up within the soul of man will take up these modern material gifts, in themselves so inert and useless, and make them radiant with a value they do not now possess. Somehow or other this dead world of matter into which, in our western civilization, especially, we have buried too much of our life, must be made to render back the vital treasure of which it has despoiled us. Our world must be spiritualized or it will grow more and more stale and dull and unsatisfactory on our hands. Not to our captains of industry, not to our developers of material wealth must we look for life and life more abundant in the future; but ever to those men who, with some inward illumination, will do for us what those

visiting artists did for that picturesque New England island—point out new and grander values in this material world with which in our blinder ways we are so familiar. The spiritual values for which Carlyle and Ruskin pleaded, often with a note too harsh and vehement: the transcendent and eternal meanings for which, in kindlier and sweeter accents, Arnold and Browning and Emerson spoke to us with prophetic voices, these are some of the guiding influences which the world must follow in the future if it is to continue to advance. These sane, well-poised, clear-sighted souls saw life and its interests supreme above all its temporary means and instruments. "Friends and helpers of all who would live in the spirit," they shall stand for all time for that spiritual interpretation of the universe which comes not in the form of speculation, but of vital truth and experience.

With the process of spiritualizing our material possessions goes the power also of inward victory over the assaults of outward fate. Ever since Zeno taught in the Stoa at Athens centuries before the present era, men have been seeking some sort of spiritual mastery over an external course of Nature that often works sad havoc with human life and its satisfactions. Whatever the method employed, the various systems of inner cultivation all agree that the simple, naïve life of the senses is not adequate to the task of emancipation. Life on the mere

animal plane comes up against disappointment and calamity as against a solid wall which it has no power of scaling. With no inner resources, no wings of thought or vision on which it might escape the severity of the onslaught, grief comes to such as a heavy weight and a hopeless burden. With no diverting interests, or ideal refuge, even the petty annoyances and trivial perplexities of the day keep in perpetual ferment the life that is dependent wholly on the outward world of sense for peace and satisfaction. No wonder, then, that, seeing how precarious and unstable the accidents of fate render the simple life of sense, the great effort of philosophy and religion has been to create in man himself some spiritual power of resistance. The Stoic found in rational self-control exemption from every form of outward evil. The Buddha strove by the suppression of desire and the denial of the very will to live that freedom of the spirit, all the more desirable in a world of sense which in itself was wholly evil. Jesus and his followers, in self-forgetful service and the life of trust, aimed to lift life above all outward forces that could do it harm. These diverse efforts agree in this one thing, that man need not necessarily be subject to an outward course of Nature with its varying changes bringing good or ill. They all affirm that man lives and has his being not wholly in a sensible world of matter but also in a supersensual world of spirit. Each

system, in its own way, declares that life spiritualized is life to that extent emancipated, life no longer enslaved by fate and circumstance. They agree not only in the affirmation of this supremacy of the inner life over the outer, but they agree also in their verification of the theory by a constantly repeated living experience. Whether it be in the calm self-poise of the Stoic, or in the mystic self-absorption of the Buddhist, or whether it be in the spiritual exaltation of the Christian, it matters little: in each and all the world has seen countless examples of man become the "master of his fate," and the "captain of his soul." In view of what life has actually attained in this direction of spiritual power well might Victor Hugo sing:

"Let us be like a bird, a moment lighted
Upon the twig that swings;
He feels it sway, but sings on unaffrighted,
Knowing he hath his wings."

Some of us remember with what interest we read years ago, when it first appeared, a notable book which is, possibly, now too much neglected. Picton's "Mystery of Matter" was a sort of revelation to those who had naïvely taken the material world for the gross and unalterable thing which it appears to the physical senses. We were told how science had analyzed matter and resolved it into its different "qualities." We were shown the process by which this visi-

ble and tangible object was forced to give an account of itself to the prying intellect of man, and how, after passing through this crucible of thought, there was nothing left of matter but a hidden residue of motion and force or a hypothetical atom. How strangely, we have said, has science spirited away this objective world which we have thought the most real of all realities. Matter itself it declares is there only as an appearance, solely for the mind on which it makes an impression. The famous "thing in itself," the reality behind the appearance, even this the strictly scientific thought of the day cannot consistently recognize. All existence is relative, says this systematized knowledge of our modern age, and though, within that realm of relative existence there is still found scope for inexorable law and orderly sequence, nevertheless a little more plastic and evanescent seems this world of matter since science has turned its search-light upon it, revealing the truth, at least, that it is a "mystery."

If the mind of man with its strictly scientific purpose can thus dispel the gross reality of matter, may we not expect that the mind, pursuing other spiritual ends, may dissolve it still further? Wordsworth had not the scientific bent, but to his poetic vision the visible world took on a shape and a hue in which all its hardness and cruelty was forgotten. Emerson in his search for truth was not bound down to a

rigid scientific method, but the transfigured form which the world of nature took to his finer spiritual intuition must count for something in the total assets of human knowledge. Swedenborg was far from conforming to the rules of logical inquiry, but when, in his ecstatic visions, he sees the whole visible universe as one vast symbol of man's spiritual life and its needs, he may have, at least, hinted at a truth that will be discovered sometime to have even a scientific value. Let man once discern the mystery of matter, and the next step will almost inevitably follow. That next step is the taking up of the mystery of matter and absorbing it into the mystery of life itself till they both become one and inseparable. If the existence of matter, as the scientists say is relative, and the outward world is there for mind alone, what is to hinder the mind from appropriating it a little more than it has, and using it for its own high purposes? As man becomes more and more spiritual it must be he will more and more spiritualize everything with which he comes into contact — spiritualize even what seems at present like a gross and unchanging environment. That this is a spiritual universe will then be no longer a truth of metaphysical reasoning: it will be a truth of experience. And that that truth of experience is the only truth there is will also be one of the revelations that come to him with

every stage of his progressive spiritual unfolding.

Matthew Arnold, in his estimate of the great Teacher of Nazareth, says that one of the two secrets of Jesus' method was that of "inwardness." The whole of life, its success, its enlightenment, its peace, its all, centred around the kingdom of heaven, and that kingdom of heaven was nowhere if it was not within—that was the key-note of all the Christian gospel. Inwardness, is not that, indeed, the secret of all life? There is a spirit in man, and inspiration drawn from the very depths of Universal Being giveth him understanding. With that wonder and mystery of the spirit within he faces the wonder and mystery of the world without. With the further development of that life within who can say that man shall not yet conquer, appropriate, mould Nature and fate to a degree that even the seers and prophets themselves have not visioned? From no stage of his evolution has man ever been able to foresee perfectly the stage that lies before him. It doth not yet appear what we shall be. The secret lies with those who, converting the great, rich world of matter more and more into terms of life, thus living in the spirit, prove that in spiritual growth alone can man find life in largest measure.

VII

LIFE MADE WHOLE

That the quality of music is dependent on the condition of the instrument through which it is produced is a fact we are obliged to recognize, even though the recognition be accompanied with some regret. Even the skill of a Rubinstein could not bring forth perfect harmony out of a piano all out of tune, or with some keys that did not respond to his touch. It seems almost a defect in the nature of things that so divine a thing should be so limited by such a gross material medium, liable, as it is, to get out of order as all things are that are subject to physical laws.

So it seems, also, when we think that so divine a thing as life is dependent on the condition of a physical body through which it is manifested. In spite of all theories to the contrary, experience teaches us that this house of flesh that seems a part of us, our very self, is gross matter, in itself subject to physical laws, precisely as all other kinds of matter. The human body in contact with fire burns just as if it were not the temple of a human spirit. In a railroad accident human limbs are broken and destroyed exactly as if they were not the instruments of conscious being. Place an acid

on the hand or on the lining membrane of the stomach, and the chemical action is as ruthless as it is in the case of inorganic matter. Indeed, more exposed seems the human body to physical injury than any other form of matter, simply because of the complexity and delicacy of its mechanism. We deplore the pests that to-day are destroying our trees and other forms of vegetation; but, if we are to accept the germ theory of disease in all its awful implications, these pernicious parasites in the vegetable world are insignificant in comparison with the multitude of deadly parasites, that, on the purely physical plane, are waiting for a chance to attack and destroy this very vulnerable and unprotected fleshly tabernacle.

Does it make any difference with the quality or outcome of life that it acts through so delicate and fallible a material medium? Surely no one who has known in his own, or in the experience of others, the varying conditions of health and disease can seriously question the stupendous importance of impaired bodily conditions as an obstacle to life's fullest and freest purposes. Every one of us, of course, may be able to recall some cases of noble and heroic invalidism that have come under our observation. We have seen men and women who, with tremendous ambition and courage, have been able to accomplish a great work in spite of a weak and pain-racked body. We have won-

dered at, and admired, more than one human spirit, dwelling in a crippled or defective physical frame, that has sung as glad a song of good-cheer, or has soared to as serene a height of the spirit, as have any who have rejoiced in unbroken health and activity. And yet for one case of life triumphing over physical conditions, we could doubtless count, if we would, a thousand cases where the same physical conditions brought defeat and failure. Half the tragedy of life is due to ill-health and premature death. Physical disease arrests the hand of the workman who, in any of the varied callings, is striving to accomplish some aim worthy of human endeavor. It darkens life's prospects, gives to the mind a wrong direction and a morbid outlook, fills the spiritual life with spectres of evil, and accounts for half the gloomy creeds and pessimistic views of life that are so widespread in the world around us. No one who "sees life steadily, and sees it whole," can fail to be convinced that physical weakness and pain are life's unmitigated foes. Even where life was strong and valiant enough to rise superior to them, its achievements would doubtless have been vastly greater had it not had this enemy to overcome. An age of sanity and intelligence can have no use whatever for bodily pain and weakness. Only a sickly sentimentality, or a false sense of religious resignation, can see any good whatever in that obvious barrier to life and its full

achievement. Life made whole is the only kind of life which we should revere, and to which we should aspire, and if there is any way in which life can be made whole, bodily as well as spiritually, that the rational mind will welcome with gratitude and enthusiasm.

Next to the subject of religion, possibly, there is nothing that is enveloped in such a mist of multitudinous and divergent theories as the nature and cure of physical disease. Here the doctors themselves disagree. Read the medical journals, the organs of the most legitimate and respectable medical schools, and you will find varied explanations of certain forms of disease or systems of hygiene and diet recommended that are often diametrically opposed to each other. Even surgery, the nearest approach the treatment of disease makes to being a science, is the subject of divided opinions among its leaders. But, stepping outside the circles of regular practice, the number of widely-differing systems and methods is indeed, bewildering. To the long-established schools of allopathy and homœopathy our modern age adds hydropathy and osteopathy, various kinds of rest cure and nature-healing, and to these faith-cure, mental therapeutics, Christian Science, and a whole brood of other schools, involving more or less of the mental with the physical in the curative agencies recommended.

Amid this confusion of theories it would seem

that the one thing most to be desired at the present time is some clear and verifiable truth that would be available to all. Mankind's need in the direction of good health is so great that it is a pity to waste time in quarrelling over mere abstractions, or in putting forth pretended explanations of physical and psychical relations that may be in their nature wholly inscrutable and beyond the scope of purely rational inquiry. We affirm here, as elsewhere, that nature and life have secrets to reveal that are more than are dreamed of in any man's philosophy, be that man the most instructed of all in scholastic lore. The truth of indubitable and verifiable experience is the only truth that is entirely reliable. Keeping ourselves as far as possible within the range of that empirical test, let us ask what are some of the facts which we do actually know as the conditions of bodily health and wholeness.

We know, in the first place, that Nature heals. Or to put it more precisely, we know that organized life is ever putting forth an effort to restore impaired bodily conditions, and to bring about a normal exercise of bodily functions where those functions have been for any reason interrupted in their healthy action. This, which, in professional parlance, has always been vaguely known as the *vis medicatrix naturæ*, we hold to be an ultimate fact, and must be accepted as such by all the schools, no matter by

what peculiar theories they may try to account for it.

We may state further, keeping still on the ground of verifiable truth, and with as little fear of reasonable contradiction, that not only does Nature heal, but that it is the *only thing that ever does heal*.

When the surgeon sets the broken limb and applies the splints and bandages, he knows very well that his part of the work is done. Or when, in some more difficult operation, he cuts into the delicate mechanism, removing diseased, or binding together broken tissue, he is well aware that even his marvelous skill is dependent on the presence of a vital force that must do the real work of healing after he has finished. Not only the surgeon, but the general practitioner, is conscious of his utter dependence on that recuperative power of Nature to which he can be nothing more than a humble assistant. To the credit of the medical profession it may be said that no honest and intelligent physician allows himself to share in the slightest degree the superstitious faith of some of his patients that he is able really to *cure* their physical ailments. He knows, sometimes to his sorrow, how very limited he is in his part of the work, and how extremely helpless he often stands in the presence of a vital force, the precise action of which he cannot foresee. He knows that the utmost his medicines can do is to present con-

ditions making it as favorable as possible for Nature to do its benevolent work. To allay pain for the time being, temporarily to stimulate the organic functions, to supply nourishment needed by a depleted tissue, these, and other offices of careful nursing and encouragement, the physician may perform for the disordered system. But all the time, he knows he is working, often blindly, as if by faith and not by sight, in conjunction with a mysterious energy of life whose ways he does not and cannot wholly understand. Indeed, the most learned and thoughtful of this honored profession to-day are coming to see and discard many of the fallacies of theory and errors in practice of an older school that altogether too ignorantly and presumptuously assumed to take the place of that unknown life-giving force. Whatever exaggeration there may be in Dr. Holmes' famous assertion about the benefit to mankind and the injury to the fishes if all medicines were thrown into the sea, it is certainly true that, in casting aside the practice of blood-letting, together with the old-fashioned administration of drugs, medical reform has improved the general condition of human health and happiness. In the progress of medical science the words "hands off" seem to have become more and more audible. Assist, guide, gently minister as you may to the unseen and inscrutable agencies of Nature, but do not presume to interrupt its action, or as-

sume its functions. The cure of disease which, to the older and less instructed physician, seemed an affair so simple and so in accord with well-understood and established principles, to the newer and more enlightened is seen to be immensely complicated, and not at all to be confined to a certain and final system of practice. In other words progress here, as elsewhere, means the constant abandonment of theory at the demand of a growing experience. That experience has revealed new conditions of normal bodily action and new elements that enter into the curative process that past generations did not and could not have known or taken into account. In all cases truth has to bide its time. It is more or less the fruit of ripened experience, especially where men are dealing with matters whose roots lie below the limits of human knowledge. In no case is this more clearly exemplified than in that earnest and thoughtful effort of man to find the longed-for elixir of life,—the secret of perfect health and vigor.

Among the important discoveries of this new and broader medical science is that of mind, or mental conditions, as a much more significant factor in the curative process than had hitherto been recognized. From the very beginnings of man's effort to deal thoughtfully with physical disorders he has perceived, and taken into account, certain degrees of mental influence in the

treatment of those disorders. He has known that the purely mental states of fear and dread depress and retard the bodily functions: while, just as clearly, he has known that hope and expectancy stimulate and assist. He has seen how sudden intelligence of ill or deep grief will interfere with the action of the heart, or increase any inherent tendency to disease: he has seen just as unmistakably that the removal of any mental anxiety or burden, or the coming of some new element of joy, increases very perceptibly the chances of restoration to normal vigor. Even the older practitioners, dimly aware that faith and good-cheer, and a generally optimistic outlook on life were of some importance in the struggle of health against disease, have themselves added these spiritual antidotes more or less to their material remedies. It is true that up to a comparatively recent period this mental treatment of disease did not go very far. To the materialistic therapeutics of a former age the influence of mind was vaguely added as of slight consequence, in most cases as a factor that could be safely neglected. With few exceptions, doubtless, this mental element enters into the treatment of the average physician at the present time in the same indefinite and unsystematic manner. Here and there, however, we do find some among the most highly-trained and eminent in the profession who frankly go beyond this vague and haphazard recognition of

psychical influences. There are some, still of good standing in medical circles, who are saying to-day what thousands outside those circles are saying more boldly, perhaps, and less wisely, that mind is a force in the cure of disease far more positive and more effective in the process than has been hitherto generally recognized. This new departure in mental therapeutics, taking place partly within, but mostly without, the professional schools, is radical and aggressive. It affirms that new psychical powers have been discovered that themselves can cure disease. It declares that there are whole classes of bodily ailments, vaguely called nervous and functional, that can be cured by mind and by nothing else. In its more extreme forms this new method asserts that even the so-called organic diseases are amenable to the curative forces of mind, and that there are no ills to which the flesh is heir that may not be made to yield to a force of thought when rightly directed.

In determining the truth or falsehood of any claims that go so far beyond the commonly-accepted beliefs of men as do these modern claims of mind healing, it is of the utmost importance, first of all to decide what we know of man's nature and constitution that would make those claims impossible. Any rash and absurd assertion, for example, may be made concerning the regions around the North Pole before the Pole itself has been explored. Since Peary

has made his famous expedition, however, we know what those seas contain, and all fanciful descriptions of them are henceforth proved invalid. Has any Peary explored the mysteries of man's nature sufficiently to tell us just what it contains and what it does not contain? Has any investigator seen the exact relation between the material organ of the brain and the immaterial mind with which it is so strangely connected? Has any expert in physiology or psychology with infallible insight, traced the exact effects of thought on the nervous system, and through that wonderful and delicate system, the effects of the same thought on the action of the bodily organs? Granting that these sciences have done much to explain and classify the workings, both of the mind and of the body, have they really probed to the deep secret of all, the secret of how mind can work in and through matter at all, or how conscious thought can in any way govern and control, as we know it does, unconscious physical atoms?

For an answer to these questions we go not to any faddists, but to the great authorities of modern science. From Tyndall and Huxley down to Sir Oliver Lodge, we find the same emphatic assertion of ignorance in regard to the ultimate relations of mind and brain. All the ingenious theories of the interaction of consciousness and brain tissue, say these eminent men of science, are nothing more than plausi-

ble guesses to explain that which in its nature is inscrutable. We know something about mind, and we know something about matter; we think we are acquainted somewhat with this bodily frame with its organs so fearfully and wonderfully made, and we think we know somewhat, also, about this spirit in man with its varied powers and faculties; but in what mysterious way those two work together, just how far the body and its organs affect mind and spirit or the reverse, this, science itself leaves a question forever open.

In pursuing this same line of inquiry the writer has taken pains to interview some of the most eminent of the authorities in the profession of medicine. To the question whether there is any knowledge that has come to them that defines clearly the relation between mind and body the answer in every case has been a decided negative. To the further question whether, on the ground of unquestionable science, there has been placed any fixed limit to the beneficent influence of mental states on bodily organs, even to the possible cure of so-called organic disease, the replies have been just as decidedly in the negative. In other words, it is admitted by the best scientific authority, both without and within the profession, that, beyond a certain limited field of observation and experiment, there is a whole region of human life as yet veiled in impenetrable mystery. We know matter and

its laws; but when that same matter appears to us organized into forms of life our knowledge of matter must be thrown aside as wholly irrelevant. Living tissue, physical atoms animated and controlled by thought, is a new and wonderful creation, no longer wholly amenable to the plain laws of physical science. To deny or ignore that essential *mystery* of man's nature in dealing with this question of mental therapeutics is to render oneself unfit for any fair or scientific treatment of so important and difficult a subject.

What, then, have we done in revealing the underlying mystery of the relation between mind and matter. We certainly have not opened up the way for the free play of all sorts of fanciful schemes or extravagant theories of mental healing. We have simply opened up the way to experience, that is all. And what has experience thus far to say on the subject? Clearing away the great mass of conventional terms and half-defined principles which the modern discussion of the subject has created, it would greatly simplify our quest if we could lay hold of one plain fact of experience that may be taken as a basis of further inquiry. That basic fact seems to be this: a thought of good-health held clearly and steadily in the mind tends to produce the actual state of good health in the body. This simple statement, of course, is wholly inadequate to describe the whole complex phe-

nomenon. The act involves the use of the representative imagination. It demands an exercise of the will in the effort to fix and hold the attention. Remotely, it has a relation to the subconscious mind, and is in that connection a form of auto-suggestion. And yet, leaving out of account for our present purposes these considerations that would complicate the process, the plain fact, as verified in the experience of thousands, as nearly as they are able to describe it, is, that a mental picture of a certain kind perceptibly modifies the action of the bodily organs. The more vivid and constant that image is, the more it occupies the whole field of consciousness, involving the feelings themselves, and shutting out intruding reflections and emotions, the more perceptibly does the physical system respond to its leading. This effect of thought generally comes into the experience as something new, and is often a decided surprise to those who have for the first time perceived its power to lessen pain or to remove disturbing symptoms.

What, then, shall we say of this wonderful fact of experience in its bearing on the cure of disease? How far can that healing thought go? Can it cure, or, more strictly speaking, assist nature in curing, all physical diseases, even those which are known as organic? We must frankly say we do not know. Our own experience, and it may be the experience of mankind,

has not gone far enough yet to demonstrate the extent of these mental potencies. But just as strenuously we contend that if we are unable to affirm their omnipotence, we are also unable to affirm their limitations. In dealing with the nature of human life, so admittedly mysterious and unfathomed, it can be nothing but blind prejudice, or the worst kind of dogmatism that would fix any arbitrary limit to the power of the mind over the body. Scientific dogmatism in a matter of this kind is wholly as bad as, and even worse in its evil effects, than theological dogmatism. True science does not settle this question with a mere word of scorn, nor does it attempt to measure the unknown with the partial laws that result from a limited field of observation. True science will leave the question open. It will wait patiently for further developments. It will go slowly, weighing carefully all new evidence, and accepting nothing except as it is fully verified by experience. Nevertheless, throwing aside all bias and prejudice, holding in abeyance even its long-established theories, and its scholastic doctrines, the genuine scientific spirit will hold itself ever teachable, and open to more light, from whatever source that light may come. In the interest of truth, a living truth that is of vast consequence to the welfare and happiness of mankind, never did the leaders of science need so much to assume that broad and unbiased atti-

tude as they do in dealing with that apparently new light that is to-day being shed on the relations of mind and body in their bearing on physical disease.

All the more do the lovers of truth need patience and breadth in dealing with these new mental developments because hitherto they have been associated with so many superstitious notions and irrational theories. It happens that what we have called the basic fact of experience, the power of a vivid mental impression or image to modify bodily conditions, has sometimes been manifested under strange and unusual circumstances. That mental impression, coming through a great force of faith and conviction, accounts for whatever truth there is in the records of healing by miracles; and all that ever took place at Lourdes or elsewhere, in any time or nation, where supernatural powers were supposed to intercede to heal the sick, may be brought under psychical laws that are entirely natural and universal. Back of all the phenomena of alleged faith healing; back of the peculiar theories and claims of Christian Science; back of even the more rational and practical tenets of the systems known as New Thought, The Immanuel Movement, and all modern phases of mental therapeutics, lies this one simple truth, the truth of the potency of thought in its varied forms and modifications. What has a sane and thoughtful world looking

on got to say to all these different attempts to lift man above the evils incident to his physical organism? We do not care, it says, for your superstitions, your strange philosophies, your elaborate theories. We may, it is true, overlook and forgive these in recognizing the fact that overbelief is inevitable in the mind's effort to deal with the facts of life. Or we may even go so far as to say that overbelief may have a decided therapeutic value in helping to intensify the mental impression. But our real interest, this same sane and thoughtful world would say, is in seeing you make good your claims. We are as desirous as you are to find some antidote for these physical ills that are such obstacles in the way of life and its highest fulfilment. We long with you for that perfect "wholeness," the root of "holiness," in which the body is in perfect accord with the free spirit. Show us then what you can do in this direction. Pay less attention to preaching, and more to practice. Verify your theories by a living experience. We stand on the borders of a world whose laws we know but slightly. Reveal that unknown world to us, we say to all who venture thither, reveal it not by doctrine or theory, but by the proofs of life, and then, and only then shall we hail your gospel as having in it that element of the living truth that alone can command our reverence.

But as a part of the living truth shall not

this new potency of thought over physical conditions have a religious value? If we mean by this that its exercise shall depend on the grasp of some theological doctrine or religious theory, we shall have to answer, no. This law of life is there for the use of all. It is open to every man and woman who wishes to try it. As a psychical experiment it may be approached from the purely secular side of life, and by anyone who can command the required mental knowledge and control. But being a manifestation of life with roots so deep in the great mysteries of nature, and, withal such a revelation of spiritual supremacy, it seems as if those who come to experiment must sooner or later stop to pray. Under the influence of whatever new experience may come revealing matter transfigured by mind, the scope of life itself must be seen to be enlarged, even to infinite proportions. And, certainly, any addition to life's values by which we can look forth on the universe through the medium of a body perfectly attuned to the harmonies around us must infinitely increase our sense of the worth of existence and deepen our feeling of reverence and gratitude in the presence of a gift so precious.

VIII

LIFE STRENGTHENED

A thoughtful critic of the statements about life thus far made in this volume might say that they are true as far as they go, but that they lack one thing, a certain spiritual dynamic that can come only with the assurance of the ultimate trustworthiness of life itself. The strength and courage, for example, with which the discoverers of America made their second voyage was much greater than that with which they made their first. In that initiatory expedition they were sailing an unknown sea to an unknown destination. The uncertainty of it all depressed their spirits and paralyzed their energies. We do not wonder that the men under Columbus, failing to share in their leader's marvelous faith in the successful outcome of the voyage, lost hope and rebelled. Man's power to work at all depends on more than the issues of one moment in time or one point in space. All the energies of life wait upon the mind's grasp of prospects that stretch far beyond the present into the unknown. Those sailors under Columbus wanted the dynamic of the greater vision, the wider faith. Lacking that hold on the unseen with its strength of assurance they came very near lacking in everything that

qualified them to undertake so difficult and perilous an expedition.

What, then, avails all other preparations for the voyage of life if men sail, or think they sail, on an unknown sea to an unknown destination? It is true that the circle of clear knowledge extends only a little way around us. Some things we do know with certainty, but they are limited in number. These things that we do know seem to be sufficient for to-day and its task. But even in the work and the enjoyment of the day we cannot avoid asking sometimes, Is it all worth while? Or, the day's sunlight is clouded with the shadow of unmerited affliction, and then the question arises, Are we being dealt fairly with in this universe into which we came without our asking? Or, when the way is hard, and we hear the command to work at our best while the day lasts, in accents deeper than conscious speech we ask, What if we do not obey the command, is there anyone in the universe that cares, or is there any final outcome of life in which it will make any difference? It is true that these questions of faith are often more implicit than explicit in human experience. But that they do underlie all experience, all must sooner or later discover. That the answers, moreover, negative or affirmative, have real life values, we also sooner or later discover. That the Everlasting Nay brings weakness into human life, and that the

Everlasting Yea brings strength we need no Carlyle to tell us. Give some deep assurance to the sailors under Columbus that their voyage is not all in vain, and that assurance will add just so much strength to their weary muscles and so much determination to their flagging wills. Even the faintest intimation that the expedition is a good one, good in its present purpose, and good in its ultimate outcome, is enough to revive their drooping spirits and improve the quality of their daily labor. Life thus waits on faith for its real dynamic. What has a pragmatic form of religion to say in the face of so deep a need? Has religion in terms of life alone any capacity to grasp assurance from the unseen and the unknown? We are professedly looking now to experience alone for the revelation of truth: how can experience enjoy the benefit of that which, by its very definition, has not yet been experienced,—the world of unseen and unknown realities?

It may be we shall arrive at a satisfactory answer to this paradoxical question if we look a little more closely into experience itself, and ask if there be not some element of faith involved in its very nature. Perhaps we can do this most effectively if we try to picture what life would be without some assurances that go beyond the seen and the known. In order to do this we need not go back to the instinctive life of the animal or the infant, where it is evident

that life is lived not by sight, but by faith alone. We will begin where conscious reflection assumes the guidance of action. Imagine the child at that point of awakened reason thrown wholly on its rational resources in the use of the world in which it finds itself. It would then be obliged to learn the nature and test the purity of the air before it could safely breathe it. It could not drink with any sense of security or eat with any feeling of pleasure until it had analyzed the water or examined the constituents of the food to determine whether or not they were wholesome. Walking by sight alone, the little one must of necessity demand of its parents a certificate of good character, or their credentials as guardians, in order, with any tranquillity of spirit, to trust itself to their protection, or submit to their authority. Picture what life would be if every individual were thus compelled to begin anew and separately the endless process of investigation as a condition of successful and happy living. If such a state of things were conceivable, it would mean that no one could live at all. All time and energy would be absorbed in determining whether the world itself is fit to live in. It would mean universal distrust, and universal distrust would mean the practical annihilation of existence.

As a necessary postulate of experience, then, we find a certain degree of faith already given as a fact not so much to be explained as to be

observed and taken account of just as we would any other fact. Partly through the accumulated experience of the race, and partly through individual inheritance, we come into life finding some things so well-prepared and settled that none but an unbalanced mind would ever think of doubting them. In general, as far as our physical environment goes, at least, we accept the world as wholesome and trustworthy. All our efforts to supply the needs of the body are made under the presupposition that nature's provisions, already tested and recommended, are healthful and nourishing. All our labor, whether it be in tilling the soil or in any other of the multitudinous callings, is performed with the tacit understanding that the laws of nature are invariable and reliable, and may safely be trusted. In fully nine-tenths of our dealings with men we unconsciously take for granted their honesty and good intentions, and were it not for this assumption, the present vast business of the world, so largely founded on a system of credit, would be impossible. In all this large field of practical experience there are no risks, or, if there are any, we never stop to consider them. So much does the efficiency of life, so much does its welfare and happiness depend on the trust we impose on our natural and social environment, that any widespread doubt or hesitancy introduced here would strike at the very roots of

life itself and bring a fatal blight upon its richest growth and fruitage.

And yet, we are bound to ask, is this faith which is sufficient for the physical and practical needs of life, sufficient for all of life's possible needs? The one thing we cannot do is to confine man within bounds that are purely material, or restrict his inquiries to those which concern only his temporal interests. Somewhere he comes up against ugly facts in this very outward world which, up to a certain extent, he has trusted. He finds that Nature's laws, disobeyed or slighted, even though unintentionally, do not fail to work him ill. He comes up against moral evil, the failure of the will, in himself or others, in the struggle with the lower forces in human nature. He sooner or later faces failure, disappointment, sorrow, breaking up more or less his first naïve trust in the world and its benevolent purpose. He cannot shut his eyes to the injustice and wrong that lie around him, and he begins to wonder why these are permitted in a universe that he may have assumed, at first, was wisely and justly governed. Whatever these painful facts may mean, they are certainly enough to arrest that natural tide of faith with which life began, and with which it is still sustained on its physical planes. Vague doubts begin to arise which call into question the wisdom and good purpose of the whole cosmic order. When purely intellectual, these questionings do

not affect so much the deeper springs of life and conduct. There are men and women who profess to see no underlying good in the world at all, and yet who go on living just as if it were good, strong in all the essentials of feeling and conduct. Sometimes, however, with moral failure or an adverse fate, doubt goes deeper, and destroys the very springs of healthy and fruitful action. Possibly this quality of doubt is nowhere more strikingly and finely expressed than in a little poem by Frances Brown, doubtless already familiar to the reader.

"Upon the white sea sand
There sat a pilgrim band,
Telling the losses that their lives had known,
While evening waned away
From breezy cliff and bay,
And the strong tides went out with weary moan.

"Some talked of vanished gold;
Some, of proud honors told;
Some spoke of friends that were their trust no
more;
And one of a, of a green grave
Beside a foreign wave,
That made him sit so lonely on the shore.

"But when their tales were done,
There spake among them one,
A stranger, seeming from all sorrow free:
'Sad losses have ye met
But mine is heavier yet,
For a believing heart hath gone from me.'

“ ‘Alas,’ those pilgrims said,
‘For the living and the dead;
For fortune’s cruelty and love’s sure cross;
For the wrecks of land and sea!
But, however it came to thee,
Thine, stranger, is life’s last and heaviest loss.’ ”

Recognizing that the loss of a “believing heart” is possible, and that it is “life’s last and heaviest loss,” what antidote has a purely pragmatic form of religion to offer for such a spiritual ailment?

We have already seen that a faith sufficient for the outward and practical needs of life was a postulate of experience itself in those relations. The sense of assurance manifested in that sphere of life was found, also, to be the combined resultants of individual inheritance and racial experience. Thus much of faith and its saving power we enter into through birth itself, and without our effort. Must we not recognize, also, the value of a faith thus bequeathed to us, meeting our more intellectual and spiritual needs? A religion of experience certainly cannot ignore the life values of the great historic religions into whose atmosphere of faith and hope the vast multitudes of the human race enter also by birth and inheritance. It is granted that all those religions are more or less associated with elaborate theologies, and that those theologies are invariably accompanied by aberglaupe, overbelief: nevertheless overbelief itself has had

a great and worthy part to play in this wonderful drama of life. Take all the important creeds, not only of Christendom, but those of the ethnic religions; divest them of their superstitions and fallacies, and the superficial elements in which they differ; get down to the substantial affirmations, which in varying degrees, are common to them all, and you will find some assertion of the goodness and trustworthiness of the world that goes far beyond the results of the individual's ordinary experience. Though Nature slay me yet will I trust in it, is the more or less clear affirmation of all religions. From the dim past, and from crude beginnings, that faith in the essential goodness of the world, in defiance of life's experience to the contrary, has come down to strengthen and cheer the life of the present. That faith has taken on some forms of unreason and credulity which growing enlightenment has been obliged to discard and leave behind. That saving faith has been associated with much that misrepresented and distorted life, and much even that interfered with human progress. In all cases, probably, that sustaining trust has been maintained through some attempts to grasp and define the Absolute that are obviously beyond the limits of the human faculties, or by some pretence of knowledge that trespasses beyond the knowable. And yet, not for these overbeliefs would we judge these historic religions. We

judge them wholly for their power to add strength to life, the strength of some living faith. It is not their intellectual assertions, but their idealism that redeems them. They generally give some good account of life, some better account than the experience of the average man could give. Laying hold of that good account of life which their varied creeds have given them, and waiting upon its encouraging and inspiring visions, men and women have renewed their strength, they have mounted up with wings as eagles. That has been their value for life. They have made a difference in the quality and worth of human experience. So far as they have made that difference they have been true in spite of their intellectual fallacies. Paradoxical as it may seem, that living truth has dwelt equally in religions that, to all outward appearance, were diametrically opposed to each other. It is nothing against faith that this precious treasure has often been entrusted to earthen vessels, the fallible receptacles of creed and dogma. Not less are all serious students of life glad and grateful that for the vast multitudes of men and women in the past, and for multitudes, though not so vast, in the present, there stand some honored traditions and beliefs that have helped them with a braver heart and a more faithful spirit to bear life's burdens and face its duties.

And yet it would be a vain hope, even if it

were desirable, that all mankind should be sustained by the faith contained in traditional religious belief. What shall we do with this vast and growing number, made up largely of the most enlightened, and largely, too, of the most high-minded and honorable men and women, to whom the established forms of religion are nothing but the remains of outgrown superstitions? In discarding the fallacies of the creeds they have discarded also the saving truth that lay behind them. It is true, in many cases the modern sceptic and agnostic are helped out by a sort of momentum of faith that often continues even for generations after the creeds and the rites of the churches have been abandoned. For this reason this typical modern unbeliever has never squarely faced the grim possibilities of life wholly unsupported by religion. Absorbed in the practical interests of the world, he has never had time to see the abysses into which his doubt might lead, nor has he even paused long enough to formulate his agnosticism into a dogmatic creed. Others there are, however, in whom opposition to religion and the churches is more conscious and aggressive. They may have been influenced by that eloquent and impassioned plea which men like Huxley and Clifford have made in favor of intellectual honesty. They may have come to share with these leaders in science the conviction that the greatest and most pernicious sin of all is to pretend to believe what

you do not believe, or to assume a knowledge of that which is obviously beyond the scope of human intelligence. When doubt assumes that ethical form it is evidently something that is not to be trifled with. Here religious dogmatism fails utterly: what can an empirical form of religion offer when the dogmatic form has proved itself so wholly inefficient?

In attempting to state the case for religious faith from the pragmatic point of view let us take the example of the scientists already mentioned. We wonder if Huxley and Clifford were as fair in dealing with *religious* truth as they were in dealing with *scientific* truth. At the very moment when they were denouncing the tendency to go beyond any verified and verifiable truth in religion, they were accepting as working hypotheses more than one unverified truth of science. They were thorough-going evolutionists, and evolution is a theory that is far from being worked out by the actual facts of the universe as far as we have thus far observed them. They were believers in the conservation of energy or the persistence of force, a presupposition that never has been, and never can be established by concrete experience. The law of gravitation, the atomic theory of matter, the uniformity of Nature, all these and other affirmations of science these men were holding to with not a question of their validity, and yet as far as human experience has gone not one of these has been

demonstrated to the very end. Why is it not fair to say that both Huxley and Clifford were men of faith, even though that faith was confined to the conditions of the physical world in which they happened to be especially interested? They knew they had to exercise faith there or else their scientific work would have amounted to little or nothing. Those working hypotheses on which they proceeded were of immeasurable value to them in their investigations. They furnished them with plans whose guidance enabled them to build up their splendid scientific structures. Going far beyond the mere classification of facts, these far-reaching principles gave them an insight and an inspiration in their labor which they never could have had without them. The fact is that science was never really born until it did thus add faith to sight. And when we think of all its modern triumphs, our minds go back not so much to the myriad plodders in facts as to those few rare minds that, with wonderful power of generalization and gifts of imagination, combined with a certain audacity of faith, have extended the range of human thought infinitely farther than the limits of actual observation and experience.

Shall we not concede to religion an exercise of imagination and faith at least as great as that which has so expanded the scope of science? Religious belief, it is true, is something more than a mere working hypothesis: but that, cer-

tainly, is one of the *aspects* in which it may be legitimately viewed. We speak now, of course, not of specific religious doctrines, nor of theological speculation, but of the fundamentals of faith. Is it fair to go farther than the observed facts and the individual experience extends, and assume in the universe an underlying tendency or disposition of things that is wise and good? Is it permissible to conclude from what we know of human progress in the past that progress is inherent in life itself, and that man is bound in the very nature of things to go on from a worse to a better, and from a better to a best? Are we making a proper use of the human faculties when, with poetic imagination or spiritual vision, we look beyond all the visible and tangible facts of the world around us and picture some sort of a good purpose working out for man an end or a fulfilment of life that stretches even beyond the event which we call death? Perhaps not, were these extensions of knowledge beyond the visible and tangible mere hypotheses, and nothing more. As simply idle and useless guesses, these religious assumptions have no legitimate claim whatever on human interest. But when, like the hypotheses of science, they are found to carry with them actual life values, they have undoubted weight and authority. This general religious affirmation that man lives in a universe that in some way or other is dealing fairly with him, has been and is of inconceivable

benefit to man. In some one of its many forms it has put energy into the human will, and made out of the ordinary material of human nature the life of the saint and the hero. It has imparted strength and courage to many a fainting soul, and saved from despair multitudes whom the billows of fate have unmercifully buffeted. That conception of the world as wisely and beneficently governed beyond man's power to understand, has changed the whole course of myriad human lives, making individual existence fruitful and rich in mental and spiritual acquisitions. In other words, this religious hypothesis has this in common with the scientific hypothesis—it works. Experience has proved that life is different *with* it from what it would be *without* it. Anything that will enable men to run and not to be weary, to walk and not faint, has to that extent proved its right to be. And, as productive of life and life more extended and abundant, it is hard to see why these spiritual hypotheses are any more to be despised and condemned than those scientific hypotheses that have nothing more for their support than this same fruitfulness in practice.

There are two classes of people to whom this practical method of solving the religious problem will doubtless appear wholly obnoxious. These are the absolutists in religion, and the absolutists in science, the one as dogmatic in its way, as the other. Those who hold to their

religious faith as something given outright, a matter of tradition and authority, will, of course, scorn any attempts to base an affair of such transcendent importance on purely experimental grounds. They will call it the religion of make-believe. They will look with pity on those who, confessing that they do not really know that the universe is good and trustworthy, are nevertheless *willing to act as if it were*,—thus basing their whole religious life on a mere supposition. These religious dogmatists will undoubtedly go farther than that, and with the haughty spirit of those who are conscious of possessing a supernatural revelation, will denounce as sacrilegious any pretence of entering the sacred fold of religion through any door other than that through which they themselves have entered.

To this class of critics it is enough to say that what is at first accepted as hypothetical may in time come to be held with a certainty that is unwavering and instinctive. Suppose the great faiths of science, the faith in evolution, the conservation of energy, the uniformity of nature, had been made known to men through a supernatural revelation, would those faiths in that case be cherished by men of science with any greater assurance than they are at present? These seekers after truth have had their visions confirmed by a kind of evidence which no alleged revelation can equal in weight and authority.

As far as they have applied the test, nature itself has borne them out in all their suppositions. Through the simple process of continued verification the main postulates of science have ceased to be regarded as hypotheses and no religious dogmatist ever held his convictions more firmly, or in a way less assailed by doubt, than does the scientist hold to those underlying principles upon the truth of which all his investigations are founded.

It would not be difficult to find men and women, myriads of them, whose religious hypotheses, similarly verified by experience, have grown into a certainty almost instinctive in its nature. Somewhere in the career of many of these there was a choice of two alternatives of belief. Either the universe was materialistic through and through or else it had a spiritual origin and destiny. Either the world was blind force, indifferent to human needs and longings, or else it was good from the point of view of these same needs and longings, having at its heart some response to man's highest spiritual aspirations. The point in time when the choice in favor of the better interpretation was made, it is not possible to determine in any individual experience. The choice itself may have been nothing more than a gradual and half-unconscious unfolding of life in the direction of the higher measuring. But, once deeply fixed in any soul, the choice has never failed to be confirmed by

experience. Earnestly seeking the good, man has never failed to find it. Every door of opportunity at which he has persistently knocked has at last been opened. Taking the world at its best, acting for the best, hoping for the best, and taking what comes, he has found through all temporary disappointment and failure, the world itself responding to his faith, and life itself growing ever richer and more worth the living. There are such to whom that choice once came in whom religious faith long since passed out of its hypothetical stage into that of a deep-seated and instinctive conviction. To such no revelations of Sinai, and no holy scripture handed down direct from heaven could bring any strength to the faith already given them that the universe can be trusted, and that life itself is worthy of being lived out with the utmost courage and faithfulness of which human nature is capable.

When we turn, now, from the criticism of the religious dogmatist to that of the scientific dogmatist the defense is not so easy. The strength of this attack was brought out most clearly when Professor William James published his notable book, "The Will to Believe," in which this experimental approach to religious faith was clearly set forth. That the use of the word "will" in the title was unfortunate was conceded by the author himself at the demand of his critics. It certainly is evident that you cannot

by a mere arbitrary act of will believe anything you choose, even against the evidence. You cannot believe that two and two make five, or that water naturally runs up hill, even though such beliefs might be remotely conceived as producing good results in the experience of the believer. As a fact we do not will to *believe* anything: in that we are guided by evidence wholly, or should be, if truth means anything to us at all. If there is given to us even that modified degree of free will conceded by modern psychology, it points to a certain choice of action rather than of intellectual conviction. We may not, by any conceivable volition, be able at the present time to accept the tenets, say of Buddhism. But it is conceivable that, going where Buddhism is at its best, and placing ourselves under that influence, we might become, as many have before us, most ardent disciples of that peculiar religion. We can imagine, even, that some such action as this on our part might become imperative if we were forced to choose between Buddhism on the one hand and Russian Nihilism, say, on the other. If we were obliged to accept one of these or the other as the dominating influence over our minds, we would probably choose Buddhism, even though at present its doctrines may not seem to our minds wholly acceptable. Does life itself present any such vital alternative of action? Looked at deeply and seriously enough, it does. In his "Liberty,

Equality, Fraternity," J. F. J. Stephen presents the alternative in this striking form: "In all important transactions of life we have to take a leap in the dark. If we decide to leave the riddles [of life] unanswered, that is a choice; if we waver in our answer, that, too, is a choice; but whatever choice we make, we make it at our peril. . . . We stand on a mountain pass in the midst of whirling snow and blinding mist, through which we get glimpses now and then of paths which may be deceptive. If we stand still we shall be frozen to death. If we take the wrong road we shall be dashed to pieces. We do not certainly know whether there is any right one. What must we do? Be strong and of good courage. Act for the best, hope for the best, and take what comes."

To this word of Stephen's the religious pragmatist would add that such courageous and faithful action as he recommends in the face of the riddle will be found to be itself the only key to the *solution* of the riddle. Life itself is not static, but dynamic. We must act in *some* way, on *some* theory, with *some* purpose, vague or clear, as the motive of our action. Is the world good? Is the universe at heart sympathetic toward our human desires and ideals? We do not know. We possibly, never shall know until we try it. We never shall know until in some way we come under the influence of the nobler faith. That is all we can mean by the "will to be-

lieve." And that choice of action, which, in spite of all the fatalism of the determinist, we do believe is open to every man and woman, has in it the power and potency of a living faith and divine assurance.

IX

LIFE CREATIVE

Whatever theological strain and stress has accompanied the abandonment of the belief that the world was made and finished in six days, it is nevertheless certain that the new view of a world still in the making has added untold zest and interest to human existence. It is immensely entertaining just to stand and look on while a new and larger world is being evolved, even though the process is slow and toilsome. It pleases our fancy to reflect that, at this very moment, forces are at work and changes are taking place, that make the present just as truly a creative epoch as any moment in all the æons of the past. It is worth while to be alive, we sometimes think, if for nothing more than to be interested and intelligent spectators of this sublime cosmic drama still going on, and destined to go on still further, the final act and the dropping of the curtain being so remote as to be entirely hidden even from human imagination.

Our pleasure as spectators is much enhanced, moreover, at the thought that whenever we see fit to volunteer, we can go on the stage and take some small part in a play of such stupendous significance. It is such a delightful privilege personally to lend a hand to the positive forces

and constructive movements that we observe around us. What can add such a sense of dignity and worth to the individual as to feel that in the advocacy of some noble reform, or in the enthusiastic devotion to some cause of justice, he is taking a real part in a mighty world process, and to know that ages hence life for man on this earth will be a little pleasanter and easier because of his action? To think of man's life as in this sense having a creative power is surely most inspiring. We wonder sometimes why men are ever willing to miss this splendid chance of enlisting in so sublime a service. Sometime, it may be when even the memory of that old finished and stationary world has passed out of mind and heart, and the thought of dwelling in a world throbbing with life and glowing with the spirit of progress is universally diffused, then this opportunity for human service will seem too precious a privilege ever to be neglected.

And yet there is a still deeper sense in which life has creative potencies. There was an implication in the statements of the preceding chapter which meant much more than appeared in the direct expression. The effort was there made to show that a sometimes harsh and cruel world lost much of its harshness and cruelty according to the degree of faith and trust with which we regard it. Is it not possible to put the same truth in another form, and say that the attitude

the world occupies toward us is determined in part, at least, by the attitude we occupy toward it? We have all seen those advertising signs that show three different wordings according as you stand on either side or directly in front of them. May not the objective universe be largely like that, showing entirely different meanings as we stand facing it from different directions? When you look at one of those signs presenting, as they do, three different oracles to the beholder, you wonder which is the real sign. Then you reflect that there is no real sign at all, but that alone is real which you happen at the moment to be looking at. Similarly, when you see so many men and women looking at apparently the same world and reading so many different wordings there, you wonder which is the real world. Is it the atheist's world or the theist's? Is it the materialist's or the spiritualist's? Is it the bad world of the pessimist, or the good world of the optimist? Is the real world the one that Napoleon looked out upon with his dream of empire, or the one that charmed the mind and heart of Shakespeare with his vision of romance and beauty? Is the real world the hard and cruel one seen through the eyes of the cynical Pilate, or is it the world glowing with love and spiritual light seen through the eyes of Jesus? It is easy to say that the real world is neither one, nor yet all of these combined, but something different from

them all, a sort of world-in-itself of which these individual worlds are but fleeting and imperfect glimpses. But how shall we ever see that impersonal and objective world, and how shall we recognize it when we do see it? Will it not be still our world, the world determined by our individual attitude toward it? Is not the supposition of such a real world back of all individual experience but repeating the old metaphysical fallacy of substance, a fallacy which physical science has long since exploded? No, the more we reflect upon it the more we are forced to the conclusion that the real world, like the real sign, is the one that we happen to be looking at at the moment. This does not deny, of course, a similarity, and even a possible identity, of human experience. The individual is not the only one in the universe who sees the sign, nor the only one who reads it from the particular side on which he happens to be standing. Whatever the real sign may be, the possibility of seeing its varied wordings is there for myriad others of his fellow-beings. We rejoice to be sharers with others of all possible experience. We rejoice to believe this possibility of experience is not individual and personal, but objective, the universal privilege of mankind. Nevertheless, the only world we can ever know is the world we ourselves are able to see. Whether to this statement we assent wholly, or in part, we certainly must see that there is a

truth here that carries with it great import for life and its outcome.

The old belief that the world was made in six days, and is now stationary, was evidently a drawback to human progress. A knowledge of evolution, revealing a living and developing world, is a decided step in advance of that. There is another step in advance even of this which mankind seems now about to take. It is the discovery of the creative power of thought, the constructive element involved in a fixed and dominating ideal.

The importance to life of this selective principle is best seen in what is called vocational education, made much of at the present time. At a certain early period of his training, earlier now than ever before, the youth is obliged to face the question of what one thing he is going to do in the world. A multiplicity of possible callings are open before him. He cannot choose them all. The pressure of modern life demands a specialization that is becoming narrower with every passing decade. To be able to find a place for himself in the industrial system, the young man must give his life to some particular branch of knowledge or kind of skill to the exclusion of many others. Whether impelled or not by natural bent or taste, he does make the decision. Let us say he chooses civil engineering as his life work. What is the meaning of that for life? It means that a certain aspect of the

industrial world which has hitherto been, in common with all other aspects, of but vague and general interest, has now been accepted as peculiarly his own. Henceforth he is to think on that particular subject as he does not think on any other. As far as life consists in labor and achievement, success as an engineer has become the dominating ideal of his life. The more he follows that ideal, and the more thorough and efficient he becomes in his profession, the more must life itself for him take on the aspects of engineering art and from that particular window he must look out upon the world around him. Of course he has many other interests in life in addition to this practical aim. But in striving to do with his might this one thing that his hand finds to do, he must to that extent necessarily shut out from the range of his thought and effort many other aspects of life, and build a world for himself wholly determined by the peculiar ideal which he has set before him.

The application of all this to the moral and spiritual life is so obvious that it hardly requires explicit statement. Most of us who have attained mature years can look back, can we not? on certain periods of our history when we selected our own "vocations" in life. There was a time in the earliest years when the whole world of ethical and spiritual truth seemed to lie before us, open to our choice. Our ears were then sensitive to appeals in the name of truth, good-

ness and beauty. High and heroic courses of life were then clearly seen by eyes not yet limited in vision. To hearts still responsive, and minds still teachable, came dreams of what life might yet become,—dreams vague and wavering, yet inviting and inspiring. Then came the choice. Not all at once, but slowly, with growing experience; not consciously, but taking us unawares in the course of the very strain and stress of living, our ideals in life became fixed and all-controlling. Gradually some few among the many visions and aims became peculiarly our own. For these we began to care. They may have been what the world calls high, or low. They may have been ideals of noble service or of selfish pleasure. They may have risen no higher than the vision of the world's fame and fashion or they may have reached as high as that peace of the soul that the world can neither give nor take away. They may have been dreams of the earth, earthy, or of the heaven, heavenly. In either case life itself, it seemed, rather than our own volition, took possession of some one of these, and built a structure of character according to that pattern. Some one idea or set of ideas became to us of vital interest. The Word to that extent in us became flesh. That embodiment in life of the thought and aim that have come to prevail is the choice of our vocation. It determines the world in which we live, a world a little different from

that in which all others live. The things for which we *do not care* lie practically outside the world in which we really *live*. The things for which we *do care* are the limits of the world for us far more than any bounds of space and time. It is hard to conceive of any world into which we shall ever come that is not thus determined by the range of our own experience.

And yet it would be a rather sad outlook for man if this involuntary and inevitable choice of a limiting ideal were all, or the most important aspect of this creative power of thought. There is a capacity in man of voluntarily choosing his ideals that is to many the most promising and hopeful of all life's outlooks. A writer in a recent English magazine, pleading with the privileged classes of his nation for a disinterested public service, speaks thus of a distinguished countryman whose life has left an indelible mark on British civilization: "Such of you as are Harrovians will remember a certain bronze tablet which records the fact that here Antony Ashley Cooper, afterwards Lord Shaftesbury of imperishable memory, made the resolution to devote his life to the amelioration of the conditions of the poor in England. The circumstance was merely the carrying of the coffin of a pauper down the hill by four drunken men who spilt their pathetic burden at his feet. He dreamed his dream and the upshot of it was some golden clauses in our Statute Books, and some blots

upon the escutcheon of England removed forever. Do you think that there were none to call him an impractical fool, to damn him with the faintest of supercilious praise as a dreamer and idealist?"

Because of its vast import to life it is well that we should look somewhat closely at the change which came into the experience of this English nobleman. Up to the time of the event mentioned he had doubtless gazed at the conditions of his native land in the same way in which ninety-nine out of every hundred men around him were gazing at it. He saw that the civilization in which he lived was disfigured by some ugly and painful facts. He saw that right in the midst of social wealth and privilege there was widespread poverty and social injustice. These were possibly disagreeable features of life that, like most men of his class, he was dimly conscious of, but if he ever gave them any particular attention, it was only with the reflection that they were a part of the actual world in which he lived, as much a part of it as were England's geographical boundaries or geological formations. Then to this man, as to many another divinely-appointed leader in English history, came the grand awakening. All at once the half-articulate thought came that these more repulsive conditions of English society were nothing more than an expression of England's prevailing ideals. Those ideals, as

embodied in her laws, traditions and customs, included inequalities among her citizens, and were alone responsible for the wrongs and sufferings which those inequalities entailed. As an embodiment merely of the prevailing moral and intellectual standards of the people these social evils took on a new complexion. They did not belong now to the real world, they belonged to a world that was one-sided, temporary, a world movable with the moving standards and aspirations of the masses and their leaders. To modify this lower ideal represented in the actual world Lord Shaftesbury conceived a new and higher ideal, and proposed to put up a brave and persistent fight for its embodiment. How well he, and others like him, succeeded in this, the splendid history of English reform and social evolution will tell. There is no more interesting reading in all literature than the story that describes the slow and toilsome, but finally victorious, efforts of some men to get their nobler intellectual and moral visions incorporated in the laws and customs of their country. The strange thing is that any Englishman, with that record open before him, can treat contemptuously or with animosity the dreamers and idealists of his own day and generation. He surely cannot be so blind and stupid as not to see that the England he is living in in the twentieth century is better than that of the seventeenth simply because of the dreamers and idealists who since then have insisted on substituting their

higher ideals for the established lower ones, thus doing away with the foolish superstition that because a certain condition of things is "actual," it therefore must needs be natural and permanent.

An ideal, then, voluntarily accepted, may be as creative in its power as those which have been accepted involuntarily by the mere force of circumstance and habit. The sculptor sees before him a piece of rough stone having in it no comeliness or beauty. Behold the miracle of thought! The crude material takes on the shape and beauty of the artist's vision. The hard rock is transformed into the noble statue at the touch of the ideal. Yet not without prayer and fasting is this miracle wrought. No mere idle dream of a sculptor ever became embodied in enduring stone. He must first believe mightily in his dream. It must mean enough to him to stir hand and brain with untiring energy. Through weary days of toil its worth and beauty must enable him to face bravely all obstacles, and rise above all discouragements. The artist's faith in his ideal must enable him to look far ahead, and have confidence in the end, though long delayed. A dream like that, whether it be of a worker in stone or a worker in human society, has a supreme potency and value for human life. It can create new worlds. Brooding over the chaos of man's yet imperfect and unformed social life, it can bring order out of disorder, beauty out of ugliness. If it is true that where there is no vision the people perish, it

is just as true that where there is vision the people must go on to increasing light and joy. Let the dream engage the whole man in his effort to realize it. Let it be the beacon-light of a large enough company, and there is no utopian picture that men have ever painted fairer than the possible world made out of present actual conditions. The only question is, are the idealists among us sufficiently united in the faith of their visions, and are they willing to pay the price?

Let a man contend to the uttermost
For his life's set prize, be it what it will!

* * * *

And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost
Is the unlit lamps and the ungirt loin, . . .

* * * *

How strive you?

From all this it must appear that the idealism that is creative, like effective prayer, must be the idealism of faith. There are men of vision among us to-day whose visions have seemed to do little more for them than to overshadow their lives with gloom and despair. From some Sinai of revealed ethical and spiritual truth they have come down to the real world and have seen the people worshipping the golden calf. They repudiate and turn their backs upon a society having so little in common with their own lofty principles. They cannot fit the ideal to the actual: the chasm between what is and what ought to be seems too

great ever to be bridged. In these the creative energy of the ideal is annulled by the fatal blight of the pessimistic temper. The muckraker in any of his varied modern disguises is nothing but an idealist switched off from the main track of progress. He has forgotten that, having once caught the vision, his mission henceforth was to fulfill and not destroy. You cannot cure evil simply by uncovering it. Wrong, exposed and driven out of one lair, will be sure to seek another. Men are never improved morally or spiritually by denunciation and abuse. All negative methods of reform, aiming solely to call attention to the evils in our political or social systems, leave the world just about where they find it, and if idealism means nothing more than this, there is little hope for a better day to come through its enlightened influence.

But these stubborn facts of evil, you say, can the idealist avoid seeing these, or should he, even if he could? The trouble with the optimist, it is urged, is that he fails to take the world as it is. He throws the light of his idealism over the actual, and calls the world good because of the rose-colored hues in which his imagination pictures it. He cannot, therefore, take account of the enemy's forces, and consequently is sure to fail in the battle with evil in which he is engaged.

If this charge, usually made against the optimist, means that he selects and arranges the facts of the world around him in accordance with his

own presuppositions he must plead guilty to the charge. But he would insist that in this the pessimist is equally guilty. The difficulty in the use of an infallible scripture as a guide to truth lay in the tendency of men to read into the sacred text their own preconceived notions. By a careful selection of passages, and by an ingenious regard for emphasis, almost any sort of doctrine could be substantiated by the authority of the Divine Word. This may be regarded as a wrong use of scripture, but right or wrong, it was inevitable. No man can go to anything, whether it be a written book or the larger book of Nature and life, with a mind that is an entire blank. You might as well ask a pianist to get music out of a key-board without any previous training as to expect a man to get any valuable truth out of an array of words or facts without the guidance of some personal bias, either of temperament or opinion. What we call the actual world is just such an array of facts waiting for a selection and arrangement which everybody is bound to make that has anything to do with it. The pessimist is predisposed to select the *bad*, and the optimist the *good* among those facts, that is all the difference there is between them. They both may see the same facts: it is a matter of emphasis how they interpret them. This tendency to see the darker or the brighter side of life does not, of course, divide the world into two distinct classes. It is a question of more or less of one or the other

in each of us. And yet no difference in temperament and training is so marked and important in men and women as this sensibility to the presence of the evil, on the one hand, or to the good, on the other.

If now we attempt to judge between the pessimist's view of the world and the optimist's, by applying the test of objective truth, what can we do? Can we do anything except to say that the one attitude or the other is true in exact proportion as it produces the better practical results? Optimism, and it is taken for granted that here is meant the kind that is accompanied with wisdom and discrimination, is founded on the fact that to a certain positive and constructive force in nature we must look for any improved conditions of living. The gardener may see with regret the rank growth of weeds that make his garden appear not at all what he would like to have it. But his discouragement on account of the weeds never extends to the fertility of the soil that produced them. Nothing but that same richness of life in the earth will ever bring forth the fruitful and beautiful garden of which he dreams and for which he strives. The optimist may see and regret with the pessimist all the evil in human society. But he knows that if ever the evil is changed to good it must be through a certain fertility of good somewhere latent in human nature. To doubt the presence of that potential wealth, moral and spiritual, in human life is to abandon

the world to evil altogether: to believe in it is to hope on, and hope with unceasing assurance in the face of all discouragements. This gives an invincible might to the optimistic temper. Relying on nature and its reserve forces, it fights on where pessimism would give up the battle and retire from the field. The idealist who is at the same time an optimist is thoroughly equipped for the work of constructing a better kind of world than the present. He is wholly at one with the great creative forces that have been at work from the beginning to bring order out of chaos, good out of evil. His theory is true because in the long run it works, and because, tested by time, it is the only theory that does work.

The battle is with the optimist, moreover, because his very attitude produces the conditions whose existence it presupposes. Trust begets trust. Put a man on his honor, and whatever honor there is in him will come to the surface. Good-will draws forth good-will. The world will respond more pleasantly in return for your smile than it will for your frown. A cheerful courage is contagious. The man of faith and hope actually adds to the sum-total of faith and hope in the world around him. In this, its power to stimulate and attract the good, the life of the optimist is divinely creative. Never did a man, thus unconquerable in his assurance of the good, go through this world without leaving it a little different from the world into which he came—a

world in some respects remade by his presence into one of a higher order and a fairer pattern.

Go into any academic halls, and you will find still going on the age-long and interminable dispute between the metaphysical theories of realism and idealism. Is the outward world a real world or is it there in appearance only? Do matter and its laws actually exist in any way to correspond to our impressions of them, or does our thought itself, or universal mind, account for the only existence they can claim? These, the questions of philosophic idealism, are some of those metaphysical puzzles on which the doctors have disagreed for ages, and on which they will continue to disagree doubtless to the end of time.

In the meantime out in the busy world, in marts of trade, halls of legislation, scenes of poverty and distress, you will find some men, taken possession of by an idea, who are solving this question of realism or idealism in a way vastly more effective, and by a method which is probably the only method that ever will solve it. This, which seems to us a real world, is not so real as it appears, say these practical idealists and reformers. Its stubborn facts are not so stubborn as some would have us believe. Its stern realities are stern only to the timid and idle. The world and its conditions are plastic, transient, fluid. They have been made over in the past, they can be made over again in the future. The life of man itself is creative. "Behold I make all things

new" is the stimulating cry with which the inspired leaders of the race have ever greeted this world, so incomplete and defective. "Behold I make all things new" the heralds of a nobler and a gladder day will continue to cry until the actual takes on the shape of the ideal, and man approaches nearer and nearer to that "far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves."

X

LIFE IN RESERVE

There is a small mountain in Switzerland from which travelers are accustomed to obtain their first view of the huge mass of Alpine heights that stretch far around it. If it is the visitor's good fortune to pass the night on the summit, there is an experience in store for him which he will not easily forget. Nothing is to be seen when, in the darkness of the early morning, he ascends to the point of observation. Then with the slow-approaching dawn he does not so much see, as become aware of, the majestic snow-clad summits that reach to very sky. They seem to come forth out of the darkness to greet the wondering gaze of the beholder. That is the magic power of light, that it can make known to us by its presence that which existed before, but of whose existence we had not been conscious.

That experience through which we "become aware" of the impressive mountain heights emerging out of the darkness describes the process by which man comes to know himself and the mysteries hidden in his own nature. Ten thousand years ago human life was made up of substantially the same elements that it contains to-day. The only difference between life then and now is that the light of conscious reflection has become a little

clearer, and in the brightening morning dawn some facts about life have been fairly forced upon our attention. These deeper secrets of life have come to us partly through our seeking and partly without it. In these discoveries science has done much, but experience has done more. On the summit of the Swiss mountain it was much that we could watch with open eyes and be ready to see what came; but after all we had to wait for the rising sun before the scene could be revealed in all its glory.

In the earliest dawn of man's existence, for example, he lived by virtue of certain mental endowments whose scene of action lies far back of the field of conscious cognition and will. Numberless instincts in him were at work performing functions entirely outside the sphere of his personal volition. That instinctive force was impelling and guiding the action of his bodily organs long before he knew that the organs themselves existed. That same unconscious vital energy was helping him in the use of brain and hand, and enabling him to achieve results which would have been impossible were he dependent wholly on his own reason for guidance. Primitive man, moreover, made use of the power of habit, wholly unaware that this accumulation of force lay in a region of life below the stream of conscious effort. He did not know that, in the acquisition of skill in any art, or in the building up of automatic ways of thinking and acting, he was rele-

gating a part of his labor to something besides the self with which he was directly acquainted. The faculty of memory, again, performed a large part in his life, but the mysterious realm from which long-forgotten events and scenes emerged into consciousness never occurred to him as suggesting the presence of a subconscious life somewhere back of the conscious. Out of mysterious mental sources, also, came forth unreasoned impulses, strange insights, intuitions wholly unaccounted for, and yet none of these revealed to yet half-awakened man the truth that behind the mind itself, as we are aware of it, there seems to be another mind of which we can be but dimly aware, and the nature of which we can possibly never wholly understand. This deep, silent, unknown ocean of life below the surface waves of consciousness could be recognized only as life itself developed and the mind turned more and more upon itself, and interrogated more and more the secrets of its own constitution.

Of the presence in himself of that wonderful ocean of being man is very much aware to-day, never so much as in the light of twentieth century science. We have not only come into a fuller recognition of its presence, but with greater eagerness than ever before we are asking what part does it play in human life, and how can it be made to play a larger part than it does in the more complete fulfilment of life for which we are aiming? In seeking to answer these questions we

disclaim, as heretofore, any intention of solving the metaphysical, or even the disputed psychological problems involved. The question of whether we have a right to speak of a subconscious mind, as in any sense distinct from the conscious mind; the law of personal identity, and the theories of divided personality; the existence of a subliminal self; all this we must leave to the psychologists and metaphysicians themselves to elucidate as best they can. We are concerned here with certain plain facts of experience alone. We know that no one moment of thought and action on the part of man can ever be explained by that only which lies within the field of consciousness. We know that life, our personal life as we are aware of it from day to day, if intently analyzed, has untold ramifications into a realm of life which no conscious thought or sensation can ever include. The more we examine our experience itself, therefore, the more impressed are we with the truth that somewhere, within the compass of our individual life, or outside it, life has its reserves, unseen and unknown sources of power, which it either stores up for itself, or else is in some way stored up for it by the universal life of nature with which it is in contact.

There is on our New England coast a small bay on which the writer has spent many pleasant hours in a row-boat. Owing to the conformation of the shores the tidal currents in those waters are unusually numerous and strong. After the

ambitious oarsman has used up his strength straining at the oars for a few days, he discovers that the way to make progress there is to combine, as wisely as he can, the power in his own muscles with the power of the tide, which is always urging his boat in one direction or the other. He learns by experience how to time his excursions so as to take advantage of the inflowing or the outflowing tide. He discovers by the same experience that to the extent he becomes acquainted with, and utilizes, these varying ocean currents, to that extent he avoids unnecessary waste of mental and physical power, and at the same time accomplishes vastly more than he ever could by his own unaided efforts.

According to certain discoveries which we are making at the present time it looks as if the art of successful and effective labor of any kind might become dependent on man's ability to find and utilize hidden currents of power that lie below his conscious efforts. At any rate we do see on all sides the failure of man's conscious will to reach its end, and the breaking down of those forces of mind and body which are under his more direct control. In a late famous pugilistic encounter, for example, the man who was probably the more physically powerful and the better trained of the two was unexpectedly defeated. He explains his failure by declaring that at the critical moment he suffered some sort of mental collapse. Just what that loss of rational poise

may have been we cannot say. But it would not be going too far afield to say that some state of mind due possibly to over-training or over-anxiety, obstructed the normal currents of strength stored up in the man's nature. He could not call in all the reserves of which he stood possessed. It is not too much to suppose that his opponent won the fight, not because he was the abler of the two, but because, for some reason or other, he did succeed in finding and utilizing those tidal streams of unconscious strength that for years he had been accumulating.

What are exactly those conditions of conscious thought and effort that are calculated to bring forth into most effective action the reserves of human power? The physician is trying to find out the secret when he tells the over-worked and nervously-exhausted business or professional man that, in order to go on with his work at all, he must change his whole mental atmosphere, and with relaxed attention, and amid new scenes, recover the mind's right balance. Experts in the deeper science of physical and mental economy suggest the direction in which the secret of effective labor lies when they assure us that it is not work so much as worry that wearies, and that over-anxious thought and the habit of anticipating evil have slain their thousands where mere hard toil has slain its hundreds. Wise and far-sighted students of life have some clear vision of man the worker at his best when, amid the nervous

strain and hurry of our modern life they are pleading for the renewal of strength that comes only with relaxation, and with "power through repose" as their watchword, are striving to connect men again with the natural dynamos of life from which too long they have been severed. How to work, and not let our work in any way "get on our nerves," that seems to be the principle through which to-day we are striving to reach the goal of healthy, continuous, and successful labor. It is nothing more nor less than the as yet tentative and ineffective attempt to get the craft of life within the control of those tidal currents of the unconscious that are ready to help us whenever we are ready to let them. To bring forth those reserves of life at their best requires, it may be, more at our hands than we are at present prepared to give. More of the life of thought and contemplation accompanying the life of action and achievement may be one of the conditions of success in this direction. A broader outlook on life and its aims in place of the narrow absorption in the world and its material prizes is doubtless another requisite for allaying the fever and the delirium that is wearing out to-day the natural sources of mind and body. The direct cultivation of some habit of retiring into the quiet places of thought, even amid the hurry and confusion of the day's toil, the blessed art of finding mental rest and refreshment all along the busy, absorbing way of daily labor—these, too,

may have to be acquired before all the reserves of life can be brought fully into action. Man is not a mere machine that labors. He is a machine plus mind, and heart, and soul. To do his best work all that he is must enter into his effort. It is possible that we have not as yet learned how to bring harmoniously and effectively into play all the forces that belong to this machine so fearfully and wonderfully made; but when we do get at the secret we have reason to believe that, without jar or breakdown anywhere, but successfully, cheerfully, joyously, man will take up his daily labor, finding a strength sufficient for every demand that it may make upon him.

In the act of thinking, especially, man has always felt the influence of these sub-conscious forces. The total wealth and effectiveness of the individual mind at any moment is made up of two elements, attention and intuition. These combined conditions of mental power might be illustrated by the man whose daily support comes partly from what he earns, and partly from a bank account from which he is constantly drawing. By attention the author directs his thought to the subject of the book that he is writing: but all the time he is drawing on his bank-account, that vast mass of knowledge that a lifetime of scholarly habit has accumulated. By a conscious effort of the will the poet turns his mind to the theme of his verse: but if, while with strained attention he does little more than wait, there does

not come the inflowing thoughts and visions, he will seek in vain to create anything worthy of his pen. The prophet and seer cannot dispense wholly with the common laws of mental control in gaining their highest visions; but these conscious efforts seem of slight importance compared with the fruits of what men call genius, profound insights or original revelations, that are drawn from sources that are sometimes unknown even to him who is their spokesman. Sometimes, indeed, attention wholly fails to accomplish its object. We try in vain to recover the forgotten name or word. With all our force of will we strive to grasp the vanished idea, or see the subject with which we are dealing in the desired perspective. The mathematical problem will not be solved, the mental picture will not appear, the truth we seek will not dawn upon us, though with long and painful effort we cast about us with all the intellectual resources at our command. Then come those manifestations of mental power that appear always as a surprise no matter how often they are experienced. In a moment when we are off our guard the forgotten word or name comes, we know not whence or how. At a time when we are preoccupied with other things the solution of the problem appears, and there flashes into the mental horizon the light of clear thought and far vision which we feel could never have come at all if they had not thus been given. No wonder that, acquainted with these strange surprises of thought,

different systems of mysticism have arisen in man's effort to seek the highest truth and knowledge. Emerson and the Transcendentalists, with their doctrine of intuition, relied so much upon these great reserves of life that they thought that simply to wait and listen was the supreme duty of him who would attain to wisdom. To George Fox and the Society of Friends the universe itself seemed to reveal its secrets through the Inner Light, and for them all the authority of conscious thought yielded to the authority of these oracles proceeding from a mental realm with whose nature they were but dimly acquainted. When to the Christian the Holy Spirit spoke, the mind itself must be silent, and their holy scripture given by its inspiration, has been for centuries the revelation of the truth supreme above all else. In the light of modern knowledge we know that all these mystic systems were but varied interpretations of the one startling law that all thought draws upon reserves the nature and extent of which no man as yet has fathomed. We may not accept any one of those interpretations; but with the simple facts of experience before us, we must miss our way in the search for truth if we, too, do not learn how to listen and to wait as well as to strive and agonize. Call it intuition, the Inner Light, the Holy Spirit, or what you will, there is something that speaks to us from out the darkness and the silence by which our conscious life is surrounded. Nor is it dogma,

but purely the enlightened experience of man, that tells us that these voices of wisdom and revelation come *only* to those who *will* stop and listen. They speak not, or but faintly, to the man who has no ear but for the coarser sounds of sensuality, greed and selfish pleasure. Very indistinctly can they be heard by him who, in intellectual arrogance and self-conceit, thinks he knows all that is worth knowing when he has grasped a few facts about the visible world in which he lives. But to him who has learned to withdraw himself a little from the crowd; to him who has cultivated the humble, teachable attitude of the little child; to him who in the sense of the mystery and wonder of it all, comes to life reverently and devoutly; to such there never yet has failed to come some word of truth that has supplemented and transfigured all other gains of knowledge paid for by the price of a whole soul's tasking.

And yet in these manifestations of the unconscious life in the form of power and light we have not touched upon a value it has for life which may yet become of supreme importance.

The reader will easily recall times in his own experience when he is vaguely aware of something present in his mind which is no longer the object of his conscious thought. It may be a vague impulse urging him on to some course of action different from that which he is at present pursuing. A teacher of the writer's acquaintance, for instance, states that after devoting some

time and thought to the investigation of some defacements of furniture on the part of his pupils, he felt within himself a peculiar tendency toward the same act of vandalism, a propensity which he had never felt before, and which required some effort to resist. Or, it may be a vague sense of spiritual disquietude or despondency, which cannot be accounted for until some unpleasant event or word is recalled that it was supposed had dropped entirely out of memory. Or, it may be, still further, that, when our immediate circumstances seem wholly harmonious and happy, some entirely forgotten, but disturbing cause may pursue us even to the verge of nervous prostration and physical collapse. In all these cases we learn that our states of mind, peaceful or otherwise, and even our appreciation of present good, are strikingly influenced by that which lies below the surface of conscious thought and will. It seems at times as if the real weaver of the tapestry of life works hidden behind the web. We perceive the results in consciousness, but very dimly, or not at all, do we see the operation. The experience of any one moment, pleasing or otherwise, is not what we ourselves would will to have it, but is determined largely by an unseen hand that is plying the shuttle.

Can we, through any direct effort, influence, or to any degree control, the work of the unseen weaver? Is the action of the subconscious mind upon the conscious governed wholly by fate or

circumstance, or can it be at least partly governed by some exercise of man's own thought and will? The answer to this question, so momentous in its bearing on human happiness, is being attempted with some success by modern experimental psychology. Entirely decisive, but not wholly agreeable and satisfactory is the answer given by our late hypnotic developments. In the light of these experiments no one now doubts that the action of the subconscious mind can be guided. The only doubt is as to the desirability of a guidance that, under the direction of another personality, may be used for good or ill according to the purpose of the operator. From the gross and often pernicious phenomena of the hypnotic trance men are turning with great eagerness at the present time to methods of subconscious control more refined and beneficent. Those impulses toward some form of action started by a past word or event, and continuing long after the word or event is forgotten—what are these but just that kind of subconscious control for which we are seeking? That disturbing or depressing influence initiated by some unpleasant thought that abides with us in spite of the present happier surroundings—what is that if not the manifestation of a law of unconscious mental guidance? The law of suggestion we call it to-day. The course of life itself is full of just such subtle suggestion. A word, an event, a scene, a thought, the personality and influence of others—all that

makes up our daily experience, all these go far below the surface of our mental life, leaving imprints on the substratum of life that largely determine its present quality. If our ordinary environment is so fraught with suggestion, good or bad, why can we not change that environment, to some extent, at least, in favor of the good? A thousand voices, in a thousand differing tones, are declaring to-day that we can. Surround the individual with the influences that make for the desired end, and you can make of his life almost anything you will. Speak distinctly and often enough into his mind the thought of good which you wish to have embodied in his conduct and character, and behold! his life itself will move in that direction. To counteract the distressing or disheartening suggestion of the voices and occurrences of the common day, let some word or thought of good cheer and hope be constantly breathed into the subconscious stream of thought, and, by a law that never fails, the conscious life itself will take on the brightness and joy of the higher suggestion. It seems to matter little whether the saner and more wholesome word be spoken by the lips of another or whether it be but the utterance of the individual mind itself in a silent act of reflection. Suggestion or auto-suggestion—the difference between the two appears to consist in nothing except the relative vividness and power of continuance of the one kind of thought or the other. In either case the

success depends wholly on the force and permanence with which a thought of good can displace a thought of evil. Suggestion in any form, it is claimed, is the method by which we lay hold of and guide the hand behind the tapestry that is weaving the tissue of life. As such it has a power of determining happiness, character, destiny. Grant all that this newly-discovered mental law professes to do, and it is difficult to conceive anything that could come into human experience of greater power to make life itself more worth the living.

In proportion as any statement of truth is novel, and transcends the bounds of ordinary experience, to that extent should it avoid any tone of absolute assertion, or the authoritative air that often accompanies a settled theory. The writer hastens to assure his readers, then, as he has elsewhere, that the foregoing statements of mental law are meant to be presented wholly in the light of tentative and experimental knowledge. He holds no theories in regard to them whatsoever. His only knowledge of their truth goes just so far as they have been found to work in his own, and in the experience of many others whose intelligent testimony he has no reason to question. No assertion or intimation of a truth is made here that the reader may not verify, if he will, in his own experience. And whether, in his own case, the experiment succeeds or fails, it is taken for granted that he will view with good-natured tolerance the beliefs of those who claim to have gone

farther than he in these unexplored realms of mind—possibly, if he be very broad-minded, conceding to them the benefit of any doubt as to their sanity and reasonableness in thus living in the strength of a new spiritual law of whose validity they have the utmost confidence.

Far short of its aim, however, will this chapter fall, if it does not bring to the reader some sense of a possible wealth of life far greater than that which is given in any one moment's conscious experience. Does your life at this moment, as it presents itself to you in consciousness, seem poor and mean? Refuse to accept that estimate of a life that, below that momentary appearance, has untold riches of experience. Are there moods when, so weak seems the will to bear the appointed burden, so dark the outlook, so vain the strife, that it appears hardly worth while to go on? Trust not the superficial dictum of a mood that does not and cannot take account of those immense reserves of mental and spiritual power that lie somewhere stored up in your nature. Reading your own thought in any one point of consciousness, do you declare that your faith in life and its worth is meagre and faint, that you do not believe in any of the essentials of religion? Do not thus deceive yourself; your conscious plummet does not sound the depth of the life you bear. Every man believes a thousand times more than he thinks he does. No creed, negative or positive, has ever yet expressed all those reserves

of unconscious faith that experience alone can reveal. Life, in short, is more than it appears to be on the surface. There are deeper currents in the ocean on which we sail which, yet to be taken advantage of, may bear us on to a destination greater than we have imagined. There are accounts to our credit in the bank of life which, not yet drawn on, may some day reveal a truth we have not known. The hand that weaves life's web may sometime be guided to the making of a fabric more beautiful than yet our eyes have seen. All truth is not in yet. With patience and trust and a sublime good-cheer we must wait on life, while life itself must wait on that experience which alone can reveal its whole significance.

It was in the magic touch of human love that Matthew Arnold found his "Intimation" of life's wonderful reserves:

"Only—but this is rare—

When a beloved hand is laid in ours,

When jaded with the rush and glare

Of the interminable hours,

Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,

When our world-deafened ear

Is by the tones of a loved voice caress'd,—

A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast,

And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again;

The eye sinks inward, and the heart lies plain,

And what we mean we say, and what we would
we know.

A man becomes aware of his life's flow,

And hears its winding murmur, and he sees
The meadow where it glides, the sun, the breeze,
And there arrives a lull in the hot race
Wherein he doth forever chase
That flying and elusive shadow, Rest.
An air of coolness plays upon his face
And an unwonted calm pervades his breast.
And then he thinks he knows
The Hills where his life rose,
And the Sea where it goes."

XI

LIFE RE-ENFORCED

There are people in these United States who think the omission of the word "God" from the Constitution stamps this as a godless nation. How else, they say, can the religious character of these people be indicated except by some specific mention in their fundamental law of the Providence upon whose gracious favor they rely?

If this contention is just, then the attempt in the preceding pages to portray the possible unfolding of life must give up all claim of being religious. Up to the present chapter the word "God" has been intentionally omitted. Not because, like the French astronomer, the writer thinks he "can get along without that hypothesis," but because it has seemed desirable to avoid the confusion of thought and the possible misunderstanding that unavoidably accompanies the use of that name. So multitudinous and varied are the conceptions of God in the minds of men, that the word itself cannot be used in any logical statement without first making clear what is meant by it. With the hope uppermost of giving an expression to the religious trusts and aspirations of the human heart so free from cant phrases and conventional assumptions that it might gain some favorable attention of even the thoughtful ag-

nostic or atheist, the writer has ventured to leave out thus far the one word that to many, no doubt, seems absolutely essential to any treatise on religion.

There is another and still more cogent reason for this singular omission. To return to our illustration: some of us have wondered if this country could not be made so obedient to divine law, and so much the embodiment of those principles which make up what we call the kingdom of God on earth that the word "God" as indicating its religious character could be safely dispensed with in the Constitution. It is conceivable that human life in this great republic might rise to such large and beautiful proportions that its reliance on a Supreme Will and Purpose might be taken for granted. A people has more than one way of expressing its trust in God. And not of the least importance, certainly, is that expression seen in a life so developed that it radiates from all sides those moral and spiritual attributes that have been vaguely associated with man's thought of Deity.

It has been the purpose, however unsuccessful, of this study of life and its development to reveal its divine implications aside from any direct assertion of theological doctrine. It has been assumed that man at his best and highest is nearer to the great Source of all reality than man at his worst and lowest. If, by any possible searching man can find out God or come into any sort of acquaintance with his nature and attributes, it must

be through the transcendent qualities of his own mind and spirit rather than through any insight incident to life in its simpler and grosser forms. It may be that the sight of God granted to the pure in heart, if not the only kind of vision possible, may be at least of indispensable value as a supplement to any other method of discovering him. It is not contended that man's is all the life there is in the universe, nor is it maintained that his highest possible moral and spiritual unfolding can of itself supply all that is needed in the human craving for the divine. But it is affirmed that any adequate description of man, with all the wonder and glory that belongs to him, must be the best approach to the description of whatever Life there may be in which man himself lives and has his being.

It is very evident, therefore, that if we are to be faithful to the pragmatic method hitherto pursued, human life itself must be shown to involve or imply in some way God's existence. Without resort to theology or theoretical argument whatsoever, but looking as squarely as we can at human experience, what evidence can we see there of a Power not ourselves that makes not only for righteousness, but for all the ends of our spiritual nature?

Let us first look, by way of illustration, at the experience of some man who is making use of the great forces of nature. Ask the builder of the first Brooklyn bridge, for instance, what was the

real ground of assurance that came to re-enforce his own personal share in so vast an undertaking. He will say that it was the confidence he had that, whatever he did in accordance with her laws, Nature would surely bear him out. This assurance did not depend in the slightest degree on any metaphysical theory he held of Nature and his relation to her. It depended on his own experience and the experience of the men who went before him. He, and all who have achieved any great results of labor, have been conscious of working together with Nature. In moments of self-absorption, or when a sense of pride in his own labor shut out all else, he may have forgotten this copartnership with something not himself. But no intelligent and successful controller of natural forces ever failed at times to realize that he could not accomplish any results whatever were he not every moment drawing from exhaustless resources of power which he himself did not create, resources which never failed to honor any intelligent draft that was made upon them.

Does not the same principle hold when we turn from material to spiritual achievement? It is true that there have been men and women who have attained great moral and spiritual heights who have been avowed atheists or agnostics. Our thoughts revert to minds of fine insight, and spirits nobly attuned like those of Huxley, George Eliot, Shelley, and scores of others who knew human life

at its best in some directions, but professed to know no other Life to which they had any conscious relation. We, who may be theists, no longer visit these honest agnostics with words of censure, nor do we now feel toward them the slightest sense of the *odium theologicum*. We know that for some reason or other they failed consciously to recognize the *spiritual* resources through which they worked just as some great engineer might fail consciously to recognize the *material* resources through which he works. Such failure may be due to a reaction from childish and gross conceptions of that Spiritual Source in popular theology. Or it may be due to peculiarity of temperament, or a tendency to self-absorption natural to the man or to the character of his work. And yet, for one great soul that has failed of this recognition, we could name thousands just as great to whom the sense of working together with another Life than their own has deeply influenced and colored their whole experience. In some such cases there has been no attempt at a definition or a comprehension of that underlying Spiritual Source, or, if some definition of the schools has been passively assented to, it has not been an essential factor in their experience. In these the sense of dependence on a Life other than their own has not differed materially from the sense of dependence that the engineer has felt on the natural forces in connection with which he works. In their

earnest search for truth, whether in the world of Nature or of life, to some seekers it has appeared as if they were thinking over after him the thoughts of a Mind greater than their own. In their moral vision and attainment some heroes and saints have been strengthened by the thought that they were working in conjunction with an eternal Will and Purpose, and that one human soul thus working in harmony with a Power not itself that makes for righteousness forms a majority in opposition to the vaster multitudes who fail of that harmony. Some to whom the calm and peace of life's great reserves have brought the deepest sense of spiritual dignity and beauty have known that they have drawn from spiritual wells which were not of their own making. To all these experience itself brought its own sufficient revelation. They needed not to define or limit the Power in which and through which they achieved. They simply knew that the world was full of vast spiritual resources from which they drew; the worker in *material* forces could not be more conscious than they of the source from which for him, the power came. That is God's first and most essential revelation of himself in human life. And no adequate account of man's life on earth can leave out that revelation, more or less clear, that in all ages and under diverse creeds, has come, showing man that he is re-enforced by something in the universe that is more than human.

A consistent pragmatic form of religion, then,

would admit as a part of experience itself the recognition of God simply as an undefined Source of spiritual power. How far can it consistently admit, also, some specific conception of the nature of that Source, or some limitation of it in the form of a definition? We are aware, of course, that to the great majority of men God is no God at all unless he is pictured in some form anthropomorphic enough at least, to be humanly thinkable. Even after man has fully discarded the notion of the Deity as a "magnified and non-natural man" sitting somewhere off in the heavens, we find him still asking certain questions about the Unseen which are in terms of the human, and yet seem to be inevitable. Is God conscious or unconscious? Is he personal or impersonal? Is he absolute or relative? Is he one or many? Is he immanent alone, or is he both immanent and transcendent? These are some of the questions that the mind still persists in asking as it turns to the thought of the mystery by which human life is surrounded. And any method of religious inquiry that recognizes God as in any sense a factor in human experience, while it may not attempt to solve these irrepressible theological problems, cannot in justice wholly ignore them.

What, then, is the method with which this practical form of religion deals with these questions concerning the nature and attributes of the Unseen Source? That method virtually leaves to each man the privilege of answering these ques-

tions, or of accepting some answer already given, as seems best to himself or most in accord with the demands of his thought and the needs of his temperament. It is possible that there are some people who cannot think of God at all except in the form of the Absolute. There may be others to whom he is wholly unknown and non-existent if he is not personal, omniscient, omnipotent, the One in distinction from all dualistic or pluralistic ways of looking at the universe. Very well, says this practical religion, regard the underlying Reality in that particular form, if you must. As individual pragmatists we ourselves may claim the same privilege, yielding to an inveterate habit of thinking of God under one of these forms or another. And yet as a pragmatist we must insist that each particular definition, whatever it is, shall be held under two conditions. First, no *definition* of God shall be held as essential to *belief in his existence*, or the *practical value* that such a belief may have for life. The best thing about the force of electricity, for example, is that men have been able to use it before they understood it. We cannot think of a greater misfortune than to limit the employment of this wonderful natural power on which we are so dependent to-day by man's ability to attain to some adequate conception of its origin and nature. If any man should insist that no one ought to construct an electric railroad, or institute a telephone system, or employ a wireless telegraph appa-

ratus, without first satisfying himself as to the substantial constitution and attributes of the subtle force itself, he would be considered mad, or else, if taken seriously, he would prove himself to be an enemy of mankind. Is he any more sane or more friendly to the human race who would limit the use of that Spiritual Force which men call God by similar conditions of rational comprehension? By an insistence on the acceptance of its peculiar definitions theology has done more to make God unknown and unrecognized among men than scepticism itself. As a condition of appropriating moral and spiritual forces that are free and open to all, the theologians have constructed formulas of belief that have been either unacceptable or without meaning to the ordinary human intelligence. For access to that same divine help the creed-makers have presented false alternatives, saying to mankind, you must come to God through this or that particular conception, or else you cannot come to him at all. And the saddest part of it all is that, taking these religious dogmatists at their word, and conceding to them the monopoly of the Divine Resources which they claim, the majority of men and women have turned from the very thought of God as too difficult and remote to have any meaning for their own experience.

Against all this attempt to banish the divine from human life by force of definition pragma-

tism presents an earnest protest. It calls attention to the fundamental and universal law of life that use precedes intellectual comprehension. Electricity means a thousand times more to man because he discovers it by practice before he is asked to explore its subtleties by an act of reason. Can it be that in the realm of spirit alone this law is reversed, and that whatever spiritual forces there may be in the universe can be utilized only so far as we can grasp them by our limited reason? We do not believe it. We believe that the Unseen Power is near and accessible to all, the nearest and most accessible of all the wealth of good that can come to man. Have you ever hesitated to turn your thoughts to God because he seemed so far off and incomprehensible? Have you ever shut yourself off from whatever uplift and strength there is in that act of communion and aspiration known as prayer because you could never think of God as personal, or because the idea of a divine Listening Ear was repugnant to your feelings? Have you never been able to place yourself in the reverent, receptive attitude, called worship because your mind has never succeeded in conceiving any Life in the universe worthy of such adoration? If so, may it not be that you have been losing some valuable help in life simply through a mistaken theory? There have been men and women who, turning their thoughts to God, have been re-enforced with a strength in their work of life

that has seemed other than their own. There have been souls that, with a habit of daily communion with their highest conception of Good, which is the essence of prayer, have been blessed with peace and light in life's sometimes dark and difficult pathway. There have been human spirits accustomed to bow in the presence of the mystery and wonder of the world, who have gained thereby nobler outlooks and more inspiring visions. We cannot believe that all these means of spiritual re-enforcement were due to any effort of their minds to *understand* the mystery around them. It was due rather to the use of spiritual forces as natural and direct as is the use of material forces on the part of the electrician. All within and around us lies that hidden Spiritual Power. At times it may seem of us, a part of ourselves: at other times it seems other than our own, the Power in which we live and have our being. At times it seems personal and conscious, a vast over-brooding Wisdom and Love: at other times it seems impersonal and unconscious, a Somewhat so far above and beyond anything we can know that we do not even try to make it clear to thought. In any case we will take Emerson's advice, and trust the mood through which the Eternal speaks, afraid not of the bugbear of inconsistency, remembering only that no one moment's insight, nor all together, can exhaust the meaning of the Unseen Presence. In all events we

must not miss the supreme value of that Life in its power to re-enforce us in our effort to find our own life's highest fulfilment. Somewhere in the universe there is a vast Spiritual Wealth which is ours not by the gift of the theologians, but by natural right of inheritance, a Wealth limited only by our own desire and capacity of appropriation.

Pragmatism, then, would sanction definitions of the Unseen Reality, but would deny that those definitions can in any degree condition man's approach to that Reality. This practical method in religion would grant the rights of theological speculation, in the second place, providing the conceptions of God thus formed shall have some real and vital influence on human experience.

It is not easy for us to think of that science which is now familiar to us under the name of chemistry as having been the subject of the strange and superstitious notions of alchemy. And yet these familiar physical phenomena, half-understood, were once thus fancifully and vaguely dealt with. Why were the old theories of the alchemists discarded in favor of the new theories of the chemists? It was not so much because they were irrational and superstitious, as because humanity found they had no further use for them, they did not work. Among the many speculations of alchemy was the notion that baser metals could be converted into gold,

and some dreamed of finding an elixir of life in some possible chemical compounds. The holding of these views never produced any appreciable effects on human experience. Men could hold them or not and it did not make any difference in one way or the other with their lives. As soon as it was discovered that these ideas of the alchemists were of no practical use, that they could not be converted into any sort of life values, they were dropped, and have long since been practically forgotten.

On all sides at the present time we are hearing the lament that the masses of the people are fast discarding the doctrines of the churches. Older views of religion have certainly lost their hold on men, and if the present tendency continues, it looks as if, in the course of two or three more decades, the cultivation of the devotional element in human nature might be confided to a few exceptional people in whom the momentum of custom is strong, or to the still smaller number who are peculiarly gifted in the things of the spirit.

It is easy, of course, to see a cause for all this religious indifference in the present over-emphasis of the intellectual and rational elements in life, or in the increasing satisfaction with the world and its temporal prizes. But those who have the religious interests of mankind most deeply at heart will make a great mistake if they do not see that an important

factor in this religious decline is the discovery on the part of the people that many of the old-time religious beliefs had no real bearing on life, and that they could get along just as well without them. This is especially true of the commonly-accepted conceptions of God. Since intelligent men have ceased to think of the Creative Energy as a miracle-worker, making the sun and moon stand still, or sending bread from heaven in response to human petitions, they have gone to the other extreme of removing him from all active participation in human life whatsoever. The God of the average intelligent man to-day, if he has any God at all, is a vague abstraction, a mere word signifying something that may have a legitimate place in human thought, but one that has no great hold on mind or feeling. To most people at the present time God is thought of as not doing anything in particular. Nature and natural laws are sufficient to fill all life's practical requirements. Man, with all his resources of mind and will, occupies the whole field of action and achievement. The modern God is retained, if he is retained at all, for purely ornamental purposes, a sublime idea to fill a needed place in poetry, or to give an exalted tone to Sunday worship. Is it strange that for such an idle or superfluous God men have no longer any earnest craving, and find it easy to drop him altogether out of the genuine currents of thought and action?

To restore the idea of God, then, to some sort of vital and active connection with human life, that is the great religious problem of the present time. It is evident that this cannot be done by any attempt to revive a belief in miracles, or a return to the superstitious religious faiths of a former age. It is just as evident that no amount of speculation about the divine nature, and no ingenious arguments brought to bear on the minds of the people will ever give back into God's hands that element of living, working power that he must have if he is to retain any hold on the minds of men. Nothing can ever accomplish this important result but experience.

Our modern age, for illustration, has witnessed a new and marvelous use of a certain natural element whose possibilities men may have long ago thought they had exhausted. The common atmosphere was probably breathed into human lungs and supplied vital needs ages before those who lived in it knew that there was an atmosphere. Being so invisible and intangible a factor in the vital economy, even after it became known and understood, its presence was taken for granted, and hardly ever consciously considered in the active course of human experience. To-day, however, our attention has been called to this atmospheric environment in a striking and interesting way. It has been found that it has a lifting and propelling quality

beyond what the majority of men have ever attributed to it. This has been discovered by no speculations or arguments, but by actual experiment. Brave pioneers have proved that, with a heavier-than-air machine, they can actually navigate so rare and invisible a medium. And, whatever value the modern aëroplane has added to man's life on earth, gives to the atmosphere just so much more significance as an element of human happiness.

As the atmosphere has thus revealed a new meaning for life through further experience, why is it not possible that the invisible spiritual atmosphere in which man lives and has his being may reveal a new meaning through further experience in living? Already through the earnest, trustful lives of certain great pioneers of the spirit we have clear intimations of what the presence of the Eternal may do for human life. Through faith in the Perfect Good men have not only subdued kingdoms, but they have brought into perfect subjection all the forces of their lower nature. Turning all the powers of thought in the direction of the Indwelling Wisdom and Love, they have not only been renewed in spirit, but renewed in all the forces of mind and body in which that spirit is embodied. Waiting in devout contemplation on the vision of the great Reality, they have dwelt on serene heights of the soul where the changing forces of the world have

had no longer dominion over them. That God, immanent and vital in the human mind and heart, can lift man and bear him on to the goal of his desires, is demonstrated as clearly by the *spiritual* heroes of the human race as ever a like capacity of the atmosphere was demonstrated by its *practical* heroes. Mysticism this, we say, with just a little tone of suspicion. Yes, but is it possible to conceive how God can ever come into real contact with human life except through some inner revelation that in its nature is mystic, an experience not to be explained by human reason? The mysterious union of the human and the divine is no more miraculous than the perception of light through the outward organ of vision. The one experience is just as much open to every living soul as the other. Men may get out a patent on the aëroplane, and monopolize the powers of the atmosphere; but there are no patents and no monopolies in the use of that vast Atmosphere of Spirit, whereon, in all ages and among all nations, human life has been lifted into the loftier altitudes of thought and action. How, then, shall we define this God that does something, this Being the belief in whom makes a difference in human experience? Why try to define him? Why insist even in drawing the "mystic line" to decide "which is human, which divine?" If the heart cannot make clear where that line lies, then surely the intellect never can.

Why not go on breathing the atmosphere of high thought, simple faith, earnest aspiration, and believe that sometime the divine revelation itself may come with the higher growth of the spirit? At all events we cannot afford to live on, unaware of a possible re-enforcement of power that may mean so much for human experience. A God that does nothing for human life is little or no better than no God at all. The old conception did not make any difference: we must find a new conception that does make a difference. And if ever we succeed in that endeavor to find a living and a present God it will be not by seeking him afar, but by some new revealing of life itself, this present human life, with which all along we have been so familiar, and yet whose inner nature and possibilities we have by no means yet exhausted.

"Our God is never so far off
As even to be near.
He is within; our spirit is
The home he holds most dear.
To think of him as by our side
Is almost as untrue
As to remove his throne beyond
Those skies of starry blue.
So all the while I thought myself
Homeless, forlorn, and weary,
Missing my joy, I walked the earth,
Myself God's sanctuary."

XII

LIFE TRIUMPHANT

We have found that life, passing from its simplest form in the instinctive and unreflecting consciousness of the animal to the rational and introspective consciousness of man, takes on many new and wonderful phases. A moral ideal, a social consciousness, a spiritual craving, the strengthening influence of faith, the creative power of thought, the sense of subconscious reserves, the union of the human with the divine, all these, coming in the form of postulates or possibilities of human experience, differentiate that experience from all that lies back of the human in the evolutionary process. Into the life of man there comes another distinguishing characteristic which is of still greater import. As far as we know, he is the only being in the universe that is aware of the event called death, and is able consciously to reflect upon it. It is true that this fate itself is common to him and the brute. It is true, also, that the instinctive intimation of some such menace to life appears in the lower animal, causing him to avoid danger, and fight for his existence. And yet no one will seriously dispute that to the human mind alone is given the capacity clearly to face this apparent end of life, and

to be emotionally affected in one way or another by its contemplation. He alone knows that the end of this terrestrial experience must sometime surely come. He alone can gaze at this certain doom with fear or hope, seeing in it either annihilation on the one hand, or continued existence on the other. However we may regard this approaching dissolution of the bodily organism, whether we meet the question of the Beyond with a negation or an affirmation, it is certainly a fact of stupendous significance in life that we are able to regard it at all. And it is obviously idle to attempt any serious analysis of human experience without some examination of that experience with reference to its bearing on this prospect of life or death as the outcome of the earthly pilgrimage.

If a man die, shall he live again? It is a matter of deep significance that, not only in the time of the ancient Hebrew writer was this question asked, but still is asked, and, as far as we can tell, will continue to be asked for unknown ages yet to come. This perennial repetition of the query proves two facts in regard to immortality which we must clearly face before we can deal with the subject in any intelligent and thorough manner. The first is that the existence of conscious life after the death of the body has never been demonstrated in any way that is objectively or universally acceptable. The Christian doctrine of the Resurrection

is obviously convincing to the comparatively small number of people who share the historical Christian faiths and accept the Christian traditions. That all the voluminous rational arguments to prove immortality have failed in their purpose is clearly shown by the fact that, in spite of them, men are asking the question to-day just as if it had never been answered. The alleged scientific proofs of a future life involved in the phenomena of modern spiritism have thus far been confined to an insignificant group of investigators, with hardly a ripple of influence to affect the faith of the masses of the people. However cogent any one of these forms of evidence may appear to the individual believer, he must still admit that, as far as humanity itself is concerned, immortality is as yet an open question. Replying to the question, If a man die shall he live again? from a purely scientific and human standpoint, we must frankly say we do not know.

But the continued asking of the question implies another fact just as clear and important. It takes it for granted that the question has been no more decisively answered in the negative than in the affirmative. Physical science may present aspects of nature that make the prospect of life after death seem more improbable. It may reveal the difficulty of conscious thought continuing after the destruction of the brain tissue with which it has been inseparably asso-

ciated. It may show forth apparently insuperable barriers to belief in man's incapacity even to think of a soul surviving the dissolution of those bodily organs through which all we know of the soul has been manifested. Science, in all its revealings of the vast extent of the material universe, and the insignificance of the individual man in the long and stupendous drama of evolution, may push back the hope of individual immortality to the remotest and dimmest recesses of the mind. But, however negatively convinced he himself may be, the scientific man is insane that would affirm that anything has yet been given in the name of science that denies to man all hope whatsoever. Science is far-sighted, but it is not omniscient. Only a mind that can see beyond the physical and phenomenal order of the universe into the very secrets of eternal being can dare to declare what is possible, or what is impossible in the realm of life and its development. In a universe so essentially mysterious no voice will ever come with unquestionable authority, saying, "Believe no more." And if ever those words are sounded in human ears, the soul will have a perfect right, in the name of genuine science itself, to challenge the authority that would thus pretend to go so far beyond the limits of human sight.

Attention is here called to this incompetency of the human mind finally to decide the question of immortality for a specific purpose, the

purpose of emphasizing man's present essential and utter ignorance in the presence of life and its possible destiny.

A friend of the writer's, a man of considerable mental and spiritual attainments, narrates a personal experience which clearly illustrates the importance of this sense of mystery in its bearing on a belief in immortality. In his youth and early manhood he dismissed the very thought of life after death as the vainest sort of superstition. He was so sure that man *could* not live after the dissolution of the body that all arguments to prove it seemed to him worse than idle, and unworthy of any serious consideration. To-day, in middle life, this man is possessed of a strong and inspiring hope of that persistence of life the possibility of which at one time he had so emphatically denied. The causes for this change of attitude may have been many, but according to his own statement, the one cause above all others was the conviction that came to him with the passing years that life itself was a more wonderful and mysterious affair than at first it appeared. In those earlier years he had thought he knew it all. He had made the mistake of supposing that his little mental scheme of things corresponded exactly to the whole grand reality. The difficulties he found in conceiving of life after death he never doubted were nature's own difficulties, his incapacity to see *how* it could be, he never questioned was a sure

index of nature's own incapacity in that direction. With accumulating wisdom came the entire breaking up of this little world in which he had been living. The more he knew of the universe the more it grew on him in greatness and complexity. The more he learned of life, the deeper and more mysterious it became to mind and sense. The grand awakening came when he discovered that he did not know it all. His very sense of ignorance in the presence of a mystery so vast was the rift in the cloud through which the heavens were opened, and he began to see the vision of life eternal. In the intimation of resources within and around him the existence of which before he had never dreamed, the old-time difficulties to continued life seemed to disappear, and, humbly and reverently bowing his head in the presence of a mystery which he has not fathomed, he is willing now to acknowledge that nature may be able to accomplish some things that are beyond the reach of his present understanding.

It may be instructive to note in this connection that the man who accomplished the greatest positive results in ancient Greek thought was one whose method of inquiry began with the dissipation of men's false conceit of knowledge. If Socrates had done nothing more than reveal to the thinkers of his day how little they really knew in comparison with what they thought they knew, he would have rendered an invaluable

service to his fellow-men. But his aim was not thus merely negative. Consider it again, was the injunction implied in every exposure of fallacious schemes and settled conclusions that fell far short of the reality? In the process, it is true, the eccentric old philosopher disturbed many established convictions, and brought some bewilderment of thought in the place of views of life that were hitherto calmly taken for granted. And yet the insistence upon the necessity of going back of first impressions and easy assumptions and considering it again has been the only way the mind of man has had of advancing to higher truths and nobler conceptions.

Is there any doubt that the coming of some modern Socrates, exposing our conceit of knowledge, would do more to make a belief in immortality possible than all the positive arguments in its favor? Let us take a few of the difficulties in the way of such a belief and see how they would be affected by the application of this Socratic method.

The majority of men cannot believe because they cannot easily see, in the first place, how there can be such a thing as disembodied spirit. A material brain and an immaterial mind, a physical body and a conscious spirit, these two have been so inseparably joined together in our experience that we cannot see how Omnipotence itself can put them asunder, or cause the one

to exist without the other. Following the line of least resistance in our thought, it is far more natural to believe that the destruction of brain and body involves the destruction of mind and spirit than to undertake the arduous mental feat of reconciling the passing of the one with the continued existence of the other.

What, now, would our modern Socrates say to those who take this position, a mental attitude which lies back of most of our present-day unbelief? What do you really know, he would say, about brain and mind, body and soul, or their relations to each other? Then, by a process of adroit questioning, involving modern scientific theories of the mystery of matter, the inscrutable nature of consciousness, and the still more mysterious and inscrutable connection of the two in one human personality, the questioner could easily draw out the fact that about these things themselves, which seem so simple, our knowledge is wholly relative and superficial. We know how soul and body *act* together, and that *phenomenal* knowledge is all that to us is at present attainable. How the two came to act together, and how the one, material and visible, stands related to the other, immaterial and invisible, is as impenetrable a mystery to-day as it was when man first appeared upon the earth. Consider it again, then, in the face of this new revelation of human ignorance. Who knows what happened when, in the form of proto-

plasm, life and thought first became incarnate in a material body? Who knows any more what will happen when life and thought again separate from their house of clay? The mystery of birth is not a particle less bewildering than the mystery of death. Why pretend to dogmatize, then, any more concerning the meaning and possibilities of the one than of the other? The difficulties in the way of the immortal hope in this instance are purely of our own making. We pretend to a knowledge which we do not possess. As soon as we know that we do not know, as soon as we discover that the relation of body and soul is not the simple thing we thought it, then far easier is it for us to conceive that in some way or other the one can go on after the decay of the other, the undying spirit, it may be, taking on new forms of matter by virtue of an inner creative energy which we now can but dimly conjecture.

Again, what an insurmountable wall of difficulty human thought comes up against when the mind tries to conceive immortal life with respect to ordinary space and time relations! Try as hard as we can, we are unable even to think of souls existing in no place in particular. We speak of heaven as a state of the soul, but when we come to put our vague idea of such a *state* into definite shape we find the feat impossible without the intrusion of this other idea of *locality*. The same difficulty arises in our

effort to think of *timeless* existence. Life itself with us means experience constantly changing, passing from one phase into another. This time-process appears to us wholly essential to any existence whatsoever. Eternity itself can be for us nothing more than time indefinitely lengthened, and if there is any other form of eternal being it certainly is not open to our present comprehension.

Equal, if not greater difficulties arise when we think of a future life *retaining* space and time relations. Where, then, we ask in bewilderment, in all the vast realms of space, are the billions of souls that have already passed beyond the portal of death? In what unknown worlds will dwell the billions more that have still to take the mysterious journey? Or, granting time-conditions there, what changes and employments will fill the days and years, not of a lifetime, but of an eternity? Can we wonder that with these problems of space and time to be solved, the thought of man has been staggered at the idea of life after death? Is it strange that, confronting an enigma like this, which it has no capacity to solve, the mind has found it much easier to dismiss the whole question of immortality with an unreasoned doubt or a deliberate denial?

And yet, to help us out in this dilemma, also the modern Socrates comes with his persistent suspicions as to the validity of our present

knowledge. What do we really know about these space and time relations *here*? Are they objective or merely subjective? Do they belong to the order of an outward world, or are they simply the mental moulds in which that outward world appears to us? Over no question have the philosophers been more divided than over this. Around none is there a greater halo of mystery than around these phases of experience known as time and space. Knowing so little about these relations as a condition of life here, why should we insist upon making them conditions of life hereafter? Can not the Creative Energy that projected life under these mysterious forms of space and time in this terrestrial sphere project life in some other sphere under the same or different forms? Out of a mystery behind us which no human mind can fathom, and into wonderful forms which no human mind could have foreseen, this present life has come forth; is it not more reasonable to trust the universe to go on bringing forth new creations under its own forms than to impose upon it our own little partial knowledge as the conditions of its workings? Life itself is as mysterious as death. It is not a whit more wonderful that we shall live hereafter than that we live at all. Surely life itself is richer in its resources than our feeble thought of it, and we may safely leave some difficulties in the way of life unending to be overcome by nature,—even those

difficulties which to us may be wholly insurmountable.

But, possibly, the greatest obstacle of all to belief in a future life is the inability of man to picture any sort of life hereafter that would be wholly desirable or of such a nature that it would be unqualifiedly attractive to every individual.

A member of the American branch of the Society for Psychical Research declared recently that his investigations had brought him for the first time face to face with the possibility of life after death. To him, he affirms, the new revelation came with a sense of deep regret and pain. He had been consoled by the thought that a life so full of difficulties and sorrows as the present would end at the grave. To have that source of comfort taken from him was sad enough, but to think of living on in any sort of continued existence was more depressing still. When he tried to imagine how he could employ his time in the long years of eternity, or what diversions in the endless centuries there could possibly be to make existence endurable, he found his soul filled with dread and foreboding at the prospect, and he regretted that he had ever undertaken a line of research that had opened up even the intimation of such an eternity of weariness.

To all who in any degree share this pessimistic view of life here, or who feel a like sense

of weariness in the prospect of life hereafter, the modern Socrates comes with even a more emphatic word of disillusion than in the former cases. What do you really know about life, anyway, he would say again to those who are pretending to measure all life by the standard of present experience? No one stage of the development of life ever has been, or ever can be, able to anticipate or predict another stage farther along or higher up in the process. By no conceivable insight given to him could the early savage have foretold what his own human life would become when it emerged into the life of the civilized man. The average member of modern society itself can have little or no appreciation of the mental and spiritual status of the men of rare genius, or of exceptional spiritual culture. The life of the individual himself passes through stages of such different capacity and quality that one has little recognition of the other. The ignorant boy can never know the experiences he himself will enjoy when he becomes the trained and cultivated man. Sometime the youth, whose knowledge of life is gained wholly from the environment of the early parental home, will pass from that to another consisting of wife and offspring, a radical change of experience and circumstance, the new and peculiar value of which can be known only when it comes. Can any folly be greater, then, than man's attempt to determine the desirability

and attractiveness of the future life by what is given of life here and now? It may be true that death will have no miraculous power to transform life into something entirely different from what it is at present. It doubtless will not have the effect of converting a good man into a bad man, or of radically changing the spiritual condition of the soul that passes through its portal. We may even concede the claims of modern spiritism, and conceive the conditions of life hereafter as repeating many of the conditions of life with which we are familiar here. And yet it is only by forgetting all the changes and developments that life has undergone on this earth that we can imagine for a moment it will be eternally the same in any other sphere into which we may enter. If life hereafter does not mean sometime and in some way change and transformation, it will not be life at all, not life, at least, as we have thus far known it. To such progressing, expanding life how can there possibly be monotony or weariness? May we not trust such continually developing experience to fill up the time, even to endless years, with its own peculiar employments? Why should we fear or mistrust? Life has been able to take care of itself and its needs in the past—it must be wholly competent to provide for itself in the future. Who knows that the pessimist here may not be sometime transformed into the optimist hereafter?

At all events unless our life is soured to the very core, we must believe that not a worse, but a better day awaits us, and even the hope that the days will grow better and better for countless ages yet unknown is not wholly unreasonable in the soul whose wholesome instincts have found life thus far good and desirable.

And yet after this negative task of removing difficulties has been accomplished the question of endless life is still open. What positive evidence can a pragmatic form of religion offer to show that death does not end all?

It is very clear that the cogency of an argument in favor of any thesis, in addition to its own intrinsic strength, is dependent also on the mental and spiritual attitude of him to whom it is addressed. The statement of a mathematical truth has far more weight in the mind of a skilled mathematician than it has in the mind of the untrained novice. You can make many more affirmations about music to the cultivated musician with the expectation of appreciation and response than to the man whose knowledge of music is only superficial. Some proposition in the sphere of æsthetics, which, to the ordinary hearer may seem extravagant or false, to the man of fine artistic culture may appear little more than a truism. Can the arguments in favor of immortality, especially those of an ethical and spiritual nature, ignore this necessity of preparedness on the part of those to whom they are

addressed? It is doubtful if any one of the reasons commonly advanced to prove the existence of the soul after death ever brought conviction to a single soul that was not already in some way predisposed to such a belief. Many, moreover, who seem to be convinced by such reasoning, are in the position of the man convinced against his will, and some deeper undercurrent of doubt in his own consciousness will sometime make it appear that he is of the same opinion still. The belief in immortality, then, like all other beliefs in something that transcends scientific proof, is largely dependent on the mental and spiritual attitude of him who holds it. In the last analysis it is something that is perceived by the soul rather than reasoned out by the intellect. Experience here counts for far more than any outward evidence. When religion gives up in despair the effort to argue men into faith in life eternal, there is always the hope left that with a little farther advance in growth and development the arguments, once so ineffective, may be overpowering in weight and meaning.

Take the well-known argument, for instance, that insists upon endless life as a necessary postulate of man's moral nature. Man's ethical ideal, it is urged, stops not short of perfection. When the hunger and thirst for righteousness really takes possession of a man he can see no satisfaction for that craving this side of its com-

plete fulfilment both in himself and in the moral order of the world of which he is a part. But death does interrupt that moral progress, and leaves terribly incomplete the ethical plan as he was made to conceive it. Will not the Power that bestowed upon him that ethical ideal give him a chance to realize it, and is not the existence of a future life, therefore, presupposed in the command that comes in the name of duty?

To men so transported with the moral passion as Fichte or Martineau this certainty of immortal life as a presupposition of a valid moral law was doubtless of immense weight. But how about the man of low moral attainment, or the man of the world of even average goodness? What is there in a man like that to which such a reason could appeal? A man must be conscious of some ethical demand within himself before he can feel any demand for its satisfaction? It is conceivable that as men grow into larger moral stature and as the world itself comes into possession of higher moral standards and attainments, then more and more it will gain moral visions for the fulfilment of which this brief life seems wholly inadequate. The moral experience of the race will then accomplish what abstract reasons could not. It is barely possible that no deep-seated and universal belief in continued life will ever come until it does come to a world thus caught up and inspired by a vision

of right and justice that can have meaning only as endless time is given for its realization.

Or take the argument based on the inadequacy of the present life in any way to fulfil the promises and possibilities of human nature. Man, it is claimed, is evidently made for longer time than these few years. The whole structure of mind and heart and spirit seems fitted and intended for a vastly more extended career. Death cuts off the youth as he is just beginning to develop his powers. It ends the course of many a noble life in its prime, when its work is still before it. At its best this ruthless destroyer comes taking man off with vast latent powers still undeveloped, and with intimations of spiritual capacities still unrealized. What can all this awful waste of precious material mean unless it means that the defeats and failures of the present foretell future victories and successes, and that all unfulfilled promises here point to a fulfilment in a world now hidden from mortal vision?

Can this argument from the incompleteness of the present life ever gain more than the half-willing intellectual assent of those who listen to it, an assent that leaves the existence of another life still an open question? It can if man's spiritual nature can ever be awakened sufficiently to be conscious of its own greatness and eternal worth. It seems natural that the larger the growth of life, the greater will be the demand

for continued opportunity. From the heights man surveys a territory more widely-extended. More and more clear will become the vision of life, less and less will the incident called death interfere with that vision, as the soul comes into possession of all its hidden resources. It is possible that the argument from the incompleteness of mortal life now addressed to the reason may become the voice of intuition itself, the illuminating oracle of the soul in a higher stage of its own unfolding. This direct and first-hand knowledge of eternal life is not only among the possibilities of experience, but the story of man's spiritual achievements even now is not wanting in the names of those who have actually attained the vision.

Not *immortality*, then, as some maintain, but the *hope of immortality* is conditional. If there is unending existence for *one* soul made in the divine image it is impossible to think that there is not unending existence for *all* in whom, never so faintly, that image is reflected. The *vision* of that life, however, with whatever happiness and inspiration it brings with it, this is something not given, but achieved. That vision has come, and will ever come to man at his best. *Life* alone can gain the victory over *death*. Life, sufficiently unfolded, will be found to be life triumphant, life, on the radiant pathway of which, the grave itself can cast but a passing shadow.

CONCLUSION

In the Patent Office at Washington there are records of many excellent and practical contrivances whose career ended with the pleasure and satisfaction they may have afforded to the inventors. They have never been adopted as a factor in the world's great industrial system. The men whose minds conceived them found to their regret that the working world was pre-empted in favor of other methods. The conservatism of established custom and the power of vested interests were too much to be overcome by any innovation, however useful and desirable it might be in itself. No man has ever gone very far in the discovery of mechanical improvements without learning that it is one thing to plan a new device, and quite another thing to put it at work in the busy, preoccupied life of the people.

If the religious method outlined in the preceding chapters of this book has any claim to novelty, it is to that extent confronted with the same problem that meets the inventor—can it ever be to any considerable extent adopted into the great currents of religious thought and endeavor? Has this purely experimental system of seeking truth any chance of overcoming the conservatism of belief and custom, or any power in the presence of vested ecclesiastical interests,

sufficient to make a place for itself among the forces that make for human progress? The advocates of this pragmatic principle know full well that religion is not something that is made in a day. They recognize, not altogether with regret, that the stream of religious faith and life flows down from great historic sources, and they are equally aware that the security and steadfastness of humanity's spiritual wealth lies in a certain tenacity with which ancient creeds keep their hold on the hearts of the people. They are not over-confident, then, or extravagant in their expectations, as they look forward to any possible adoption of this new method by the world at large. The most they can hope is that its practical suggestions may, in the course of time, come to modify the aim and spirit of existing systems. In order to accomplish even that much, or in order, certainly, to gain the entire loyalty and devotion of even a few progressive spirits, there are some aspects of the time-spirit which it must face and reconstruct, phases to which it may be well to call attention before we close the discussion.

The first element in the time-spirit to which the pragmatic principle is opposed is the almost universal assumption that truth is a fixed quantity, independent of any change and growth in the life of man. Our leading American educator, in attempting to give his conception of what the

religion of the future would be, voices to some extent this prevailing tendency to ignore the possibilities of human development. Dr. Eliot's account of the coming religion is wholly acceptable and gratifying to the rational and cultivated thought of his day. It is pleasing, chiefly because it expresses so well the ethical and spiritual ideals of so many intelligent men and women of the present time. But when it is taken as an expression of the ideals of generations not yet born, some, even of its most ardent admirers, would hesitate a little. Predictions of the result of an election, for instance, are vain until the returns are all in. The towns that are not yet heard from may send reports that would put a new and unexpected turn to the affair. Some of us think that predictions about the religious future of man are impossible, because the returns are not yet all in on which such a prediction can be founded. There are some districts of man's mental and spiritual nature yet to be heard from. Human nature does not remain always the same. It has developed some new and unexpected features in the past, it will develop other new and unexpected features in the future. Indeed, in view of that yet unformed and unpredictable truth which the future unfolding of life alone can determine, Dr. Eliot's forward look is more *creative* than *prophetic* in its significance. Dr. Dewey, one of the leading pragmatists, has somewhere said

that thinking is not merely an external scaffolding which may be torn down when the building has been erected. It is more like the materials that enter into its construction. If that be true then any man's *thought* about the religion of the future, especially if it come with the authority of eminent position, is itself one of the determining factors of that coming religion. What other factors may enter in we do not know. But we are sure that man is not yet full-grown. His religion, then, cannot be looked upon as something given, or as something easily to be foreseen. New, and as yet dimly perceived mental and spiritual powers which can be known to man only in his full maturity, may make null and void all our present-day predictions. The sooner men can give up the assumption that religious truth is an objective and unalterable gift handed down to them, irrespective of their own growth and progress, the better it will be for their spiritual welfare. And if this new pragmatic method can influence them, in never so slight a degree, to look to themselves and their own spiritual growth as a source of any new truth that may come to them, then it will speak not wholly in vain to the present generation.

The time-spirit, again, presents two forms of inertia which this new religious message must encounter, and deal with as best it may. First, there is the intellectual inertia of established belief and unreasoning prejudice.

A certain Jewish enthusiast once complained bitterly of the narrow conservatism and bigotry of his time. His people were accustomed to stone their prophets coming with any novel message, though afterwards those same prophets, received a tardy honor when their message had become respectable. He spoke to ears so closed against any revelation of truth that went beyond their time-honored doctrines, that, even though one should be raised from the dead, they would not believe. The great mass of the Jewish nation to whom Jesus addressed his new gospel were a people firm in the conviction that they knew all religious truth that was worth knowing. It is a significant fact that not to these, the safe and respectable believers, but to a small company of despised and fanatical followers of a new prophet, we owe the perpetuation of spiritual truths that have been of inestimable benefit to humanity.

If history had not proved the sanity and worth of those novel Christian teachings, there is not the slightest doubt that we, who form the safe and respectable class of believers in our day, would sympathize wholly with the mass of the Jewish people rather than with the radical Nazarene reformer and his disciples. We have an ingrained distrust of novelties, whether they be in the direction of psychical development or social reconstruction. We dread anything that threatens to disturb our settled views, or to rev-

olutionize our familiar order of things, even though those views and that order are far from being the truest and best. We naturally suspect the intellectual capacity, and even the character, of those who look favorably upon some new developments either in the spiritual or social sphere, and we would not for the world be classed in with such erratic and fanatical people. We insist, first of all on being safe and sane, and most of us would rather be wrong with the respectable and honored majority than be right with the outcast and fanatical minority.

Of course we must concede something of value to this dignified spirit of conservatism. It is no doubt the balance-wheel that has steadied the machinery of life and saved it from many a threatening evil of error and superstition. And yet an experimental form of religion such as we are here advocating pleads for a freer movement and a greater spirit of adventure than the conservative temper has hitherto allowed. Granting that there is any value for life whatever in the many novel ideals of social reconstruction which to us now may seem so revolutionary; admitting that in the new developments of mental and spiritual laws there may be at least a modicum of truth that makes for health and happiness; assuming that in the cultivation of those mystical elements of the soul, from which we sometimes turn away with suspicion, there may be some small resources for life in

its struggle with pain and evil; yielding even so much of worth as this to the revelations of a new age, is it then wise to give over the care of these important interests wholly to the one-sided and fanatical? These novelties do not present themselves to us in the form of mere fantastic notions, or unverifiable theories. They come as truths to be proved, and laws to be demonstrated by our own experience. They plead with the conservative spirit of the age to come out of its beaten and safe pathways far enough, at least, to test them by earnest trial and serious practice. Those who have already heard that plea for progressive action have not always been the sanest and most trustworthy leaders in these new spheres of human advance. All the more urgent is the need, therefore, for the broader and more thoughtful majority to arouse itself from the inertia of custom and respectability in order at least to test the validity of some claims that promise so much in the direction of human strength and happiness.

The second form of inertia with which a proposed experimental religion must contend is even more formidable than that of conservatism; it is the inertia of self-satisfaction and spiritual indifference. The average men and women of to-day, especially if they be moderately prosperous, and not too well acquainted with affliction, think the world is about good enough as it is, or, if it ever does occur to them that it

might be better, they never dream that they could help improve it. They are perfectly contented with life and its outward gifts, or, if they are discontented, it is in the desire for more gifts of the same outward and temporal nature. They are wholly satisfied with themselves, and are not greatly disturbed by any unrealized ethical ideals or unattained spiritual aspirations. We see them everywhere to-day, these average, complacent lives that take the world just as they find it with no thought of improving it. We see them in business marts, enterprising, dominant, materially successful. We see them in comfortable homes, in the enjoyment of the ordinary domestic privileges. We see them in social functions, more or less taken up with varied forms of pleasure. We see them whirling along our streets in automobiles, people upon whom, for the most part, the world makes a rather pleasant impression. As the material conditions of life improve, this class of prosperous and satisfied men and women must continually increase in numbers, becoming more and more a type of life with which leaders and reformers are obliged to reckon.

Not very promising material this, surely, for a religion to work upon, whose fundamental tenet is that life is not yet finished, and whose only appeal is to endless growth and unfolding. Fortunate it is if upon these spiritually complacent souls rests some ancient religious in-

fluence, the outward momentum of an ancestral form of worship. Fortunate, also, if a conventional religious faith, or an elaborate and attractive ritual can cast even a faint spiritual radiance over lives that tend more and more to become absorbed in the material and the temporal. But what hope with these has a religion without history or ritual, but with only the inspiration of unexplored spiritual possibilities to offer as a stimulus and motive? Little or no hope, possibly. But we do not know what the years may yet bring forth in the mysterious workings of the human spirit. Religion has not always come to men in the stress and strain of life. It does not always come as a great wave of enthusiasm following widespread disaster and suffering. Where the voice of hope and aspiration fails to be heard in the earthquake and the whirlwind, it has been detected in the softer and quieter tones of the spirit. The mere promise of a better day may yet arouse a people, however complacent they may be in the present. Some element of spiritual discontent may yet seize on souls that to all outward appearance are now wholly self-satisfied. Some sense of eternal values yet to be achieved may still come to lives that to-day seem wholly absorbed in the passing things of sense and matter. A religion that presents a whole world of experience to be explored may yet have its day. When the religion of dogma shall have lost its dominion over the minds of men, who

shall say that the vistas opened up by a new and living truth shall not come, to light again those holy fires of the heart that without this new gospel are in danger of being extinguished?

Not wholly with a vain dream do we entertain ourselves then, when we picture even the ideal of a church that may sometime be founded on this pragmatic principle in religion. In the more general sense, that church would consist of every man and woman in all the churches who is inspired with the spirit of progress, and who lays more stress on the fruits of living than on abstract and useless theories. In the more specific sense, that new church would consist of a band of earnest and thoughtful men and women gathered, possibly, out of the ranks of the apparently sceptical and indifferent, who would organize for united thought and effort in the practical directions here outlined. Unlike all other churches, the conditions of membership in this would be based less on claims of knowledge than on a humble, reverent confession of ignorance. Instead of formulating dogmas that map out and define the Infinite, here would be presented the inspiring idea of a universe and a life larger and richer than any man's thought of it. If the members of such a religious organization came together bound by any covenant, that form of agreement would rest on the simple faith in the latent and undeveloped capacities of the human soul. This, the first and the only es-

sential faith: if, out of the richer experience and broader spiritual growth which such a church might produce, it should develop some common faith in unseen and eternal realities, or even if, out of its unfolding life, there might grow up something that might seem like a theology, all this would be the blossom and the fruitage rather than the root or the trunk of that tree of life the growth of which is the object of its endeavors.

This ideal church, moreover, would be based on a broad and generous spirit of toleration. While it would have no use for the idle dogmas and unverified claims of the established churches, and while it would see clearly the logical fallacies of some of the new religious cults of our modern age, it would, nevertheless, recognize just as clearly the life values that all these forms of overbelief may contain, and would respect them for their kernel of truth rather than condemn them for their shell of error. In a life that is so liable to weakness, darkness, and despair, anything that *helps* is too precious to be despised. And those especially, in whose estimation life and its values are of supreme importance, shall find a more needful work to do than to attack or antagonize any fellow-mortals who in their fallible ways are aiming to impart some element of light and strength to human existence.

This pragmatic church again, would seek to embody the rare union of a sane mind with the

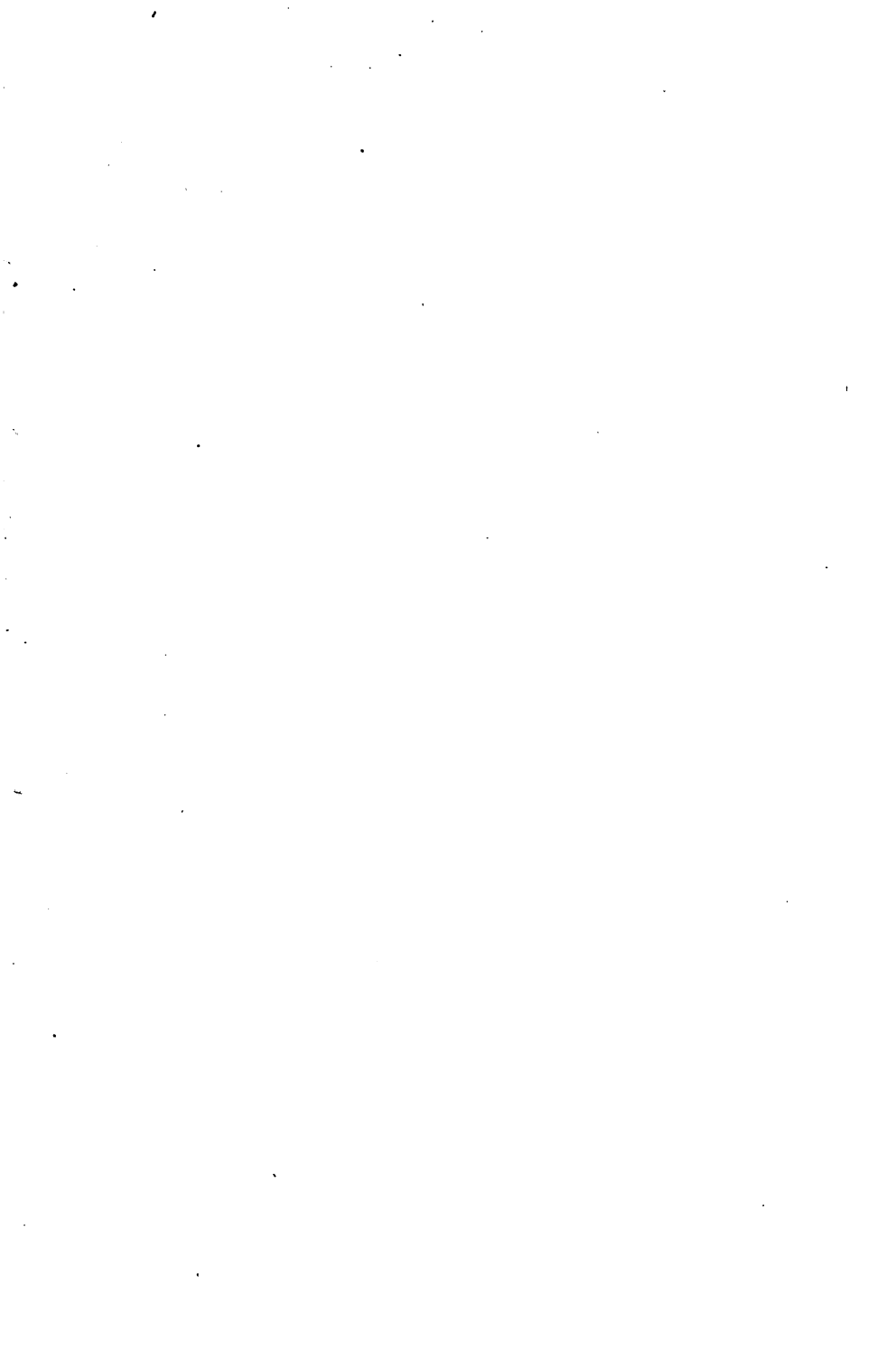
freest spirit of progress. Its members would not accept an alleged truth simply because it is new, nor would they reject it for the same reason. They would not be given to the indulgence in "fads" simply for the novelty of the thing, nor would they be frightened away by that epithet from the serious trial of something that might prove to be of inestimable worth to humanity. They would be keen in their power to distinguish the morbid from the wholesome, and mere nervous excitability from spiritual exaltation; but, at the same time, no undeserved taunt of abnormality and emotionalism would deter them from the earnest investigation of whatever promises richer possibilities of experience. The distinguishing characteristics of this new church, in short, will be freedom and courage. Thoughtfully, slowly, proving every step taken in advance by experience, yet ever with the forward look, with the firm faith that there is yet new light to break out of the mysterious word written in terms of Nature and life, this new church will go on its way, leading, rather than following, in that onward march which mankind is surely making toward a brighter day and a nobler spiritual dominion.

Nor is it unreasonable to picture this ideal church, founded on the pragmatic principle, appropriating for its own light and inspiration all the great sources of moral and spiritual help that have come down from the past. The

stimulating and suggestive power of all holy scripture, gathered from the literature of all nations, ancient and modern; the revealing and enlightening influence of the great and good who have opened up the higher possibilities of human nature, and the example of him, especially, whose life and teachings have given their name and stamp to our western civilization; all the noblest and loftiest ideals represented in the time-spirit of the present age; all these would form a part of the wealth of this church of the living spirit. Ritual, worship, prayer, these, too, shall form a part of its activities, all admitted on the condition alone that they shall have for life itself some real and vital significance. Some allowance for the personal equation, doubtless, will the new religion make in all these means of spiritual development. Varied, according to the diversity of human gifts, will be the lines of effort and growth provided for its members. Those who may not find the way of help and progress in prayer and worship may find it in some form of service, or in their own chosen courses of spiritual culture and attainment. Open to all, if not used by all, however, must stand within the temple of even a religion so practical, some avenues that open toward the Highest, some worship of eternal values, revealing ever the limitless possibilities of the human spirit.

That the present generation has a place for this form of religion is not, then, an entirely

idle hope. It comes in the appealing shape of an invitation and a prospect. It presents an attractive country to be explored, a secret of life to be revealed. "Behold I stand at the door and knock" is repeating ever the Mystery by which human existence is still surrounded. Something, it must be, there still abides in the nature of man that will yet awake to hear and obey so persistent a summons.



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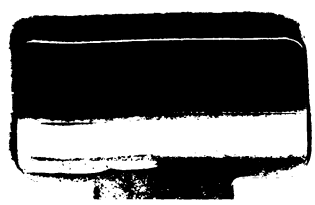
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